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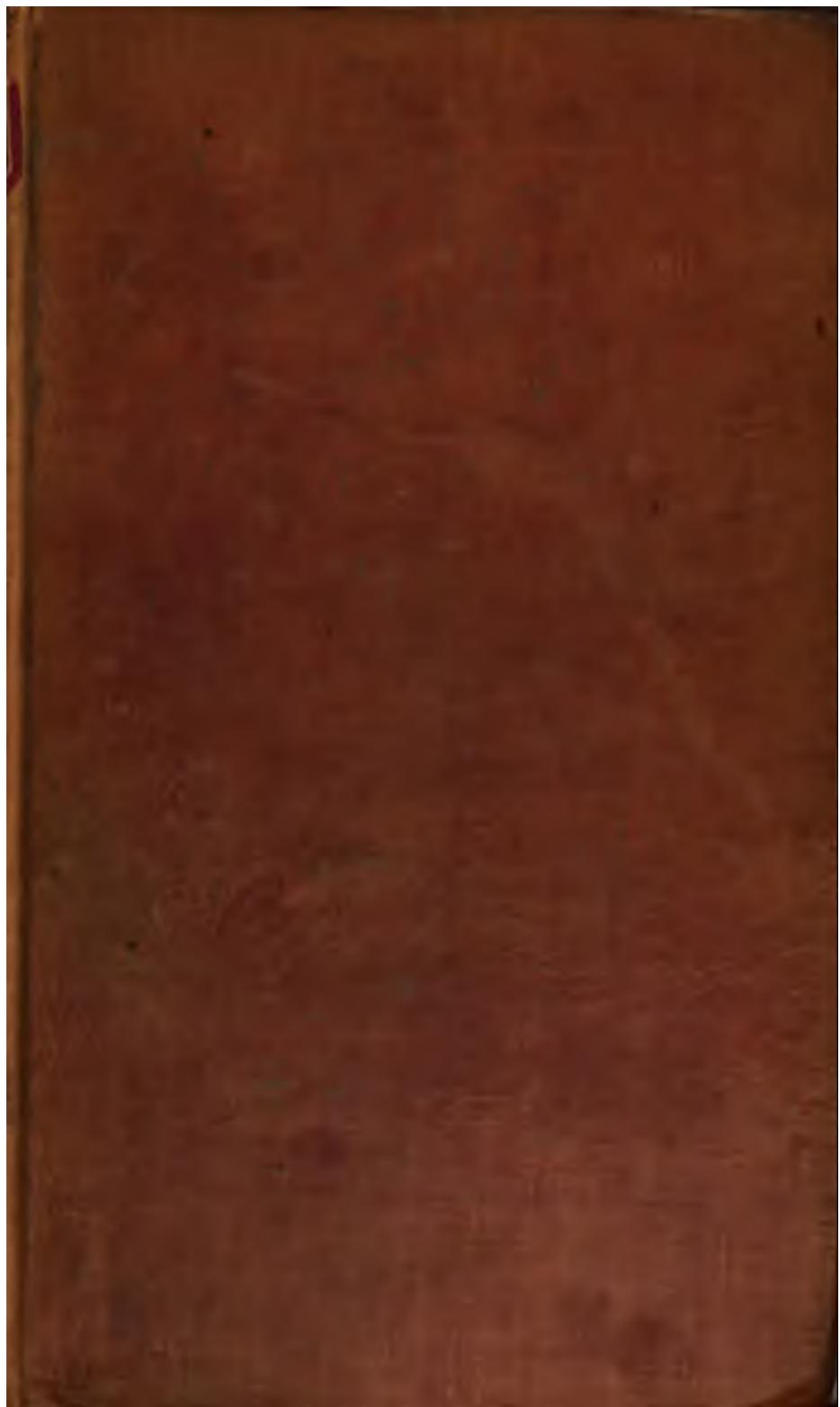
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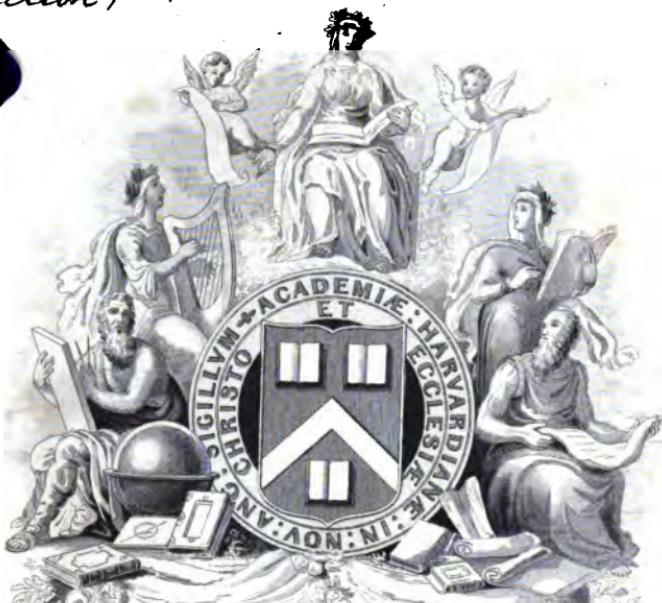
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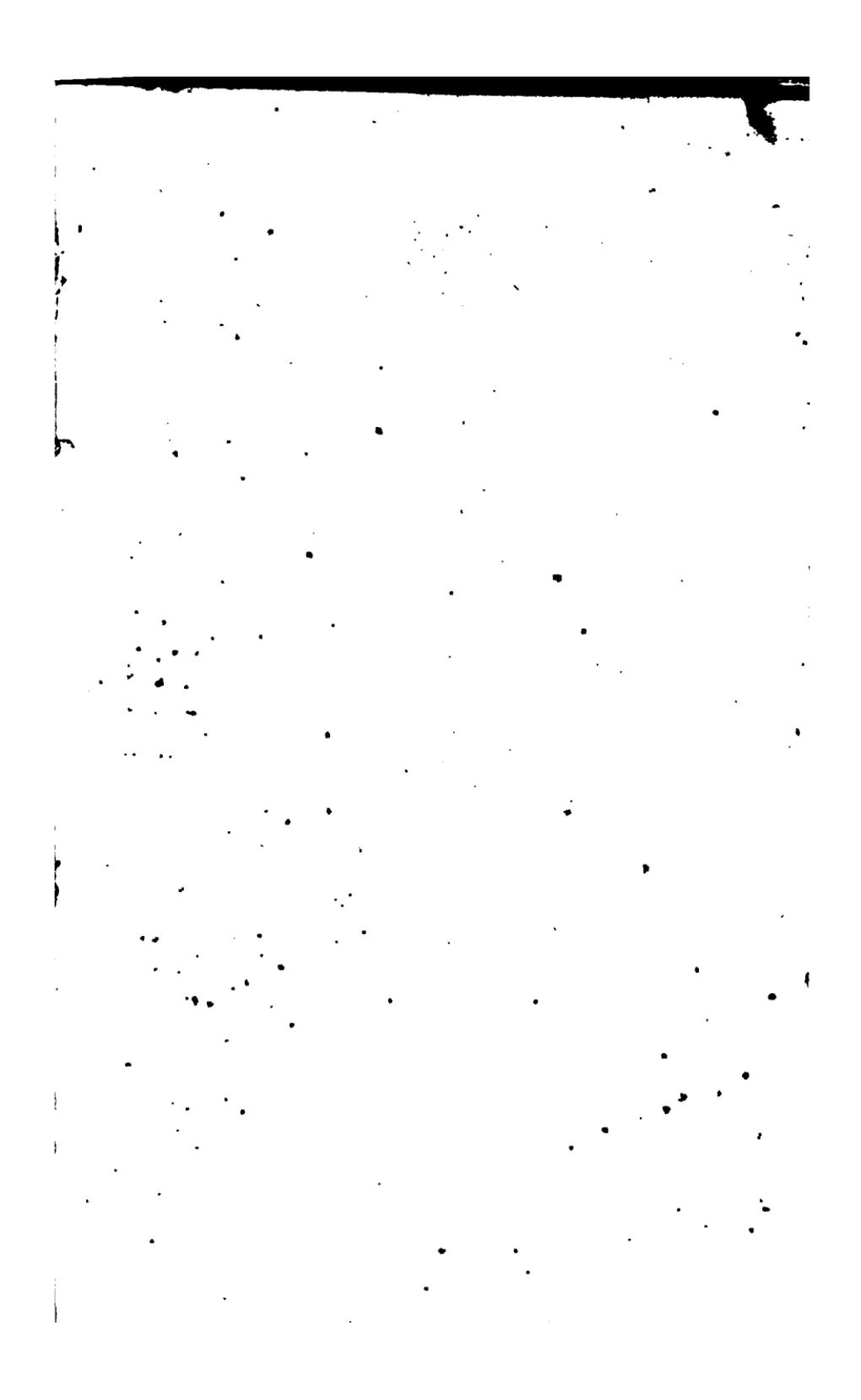
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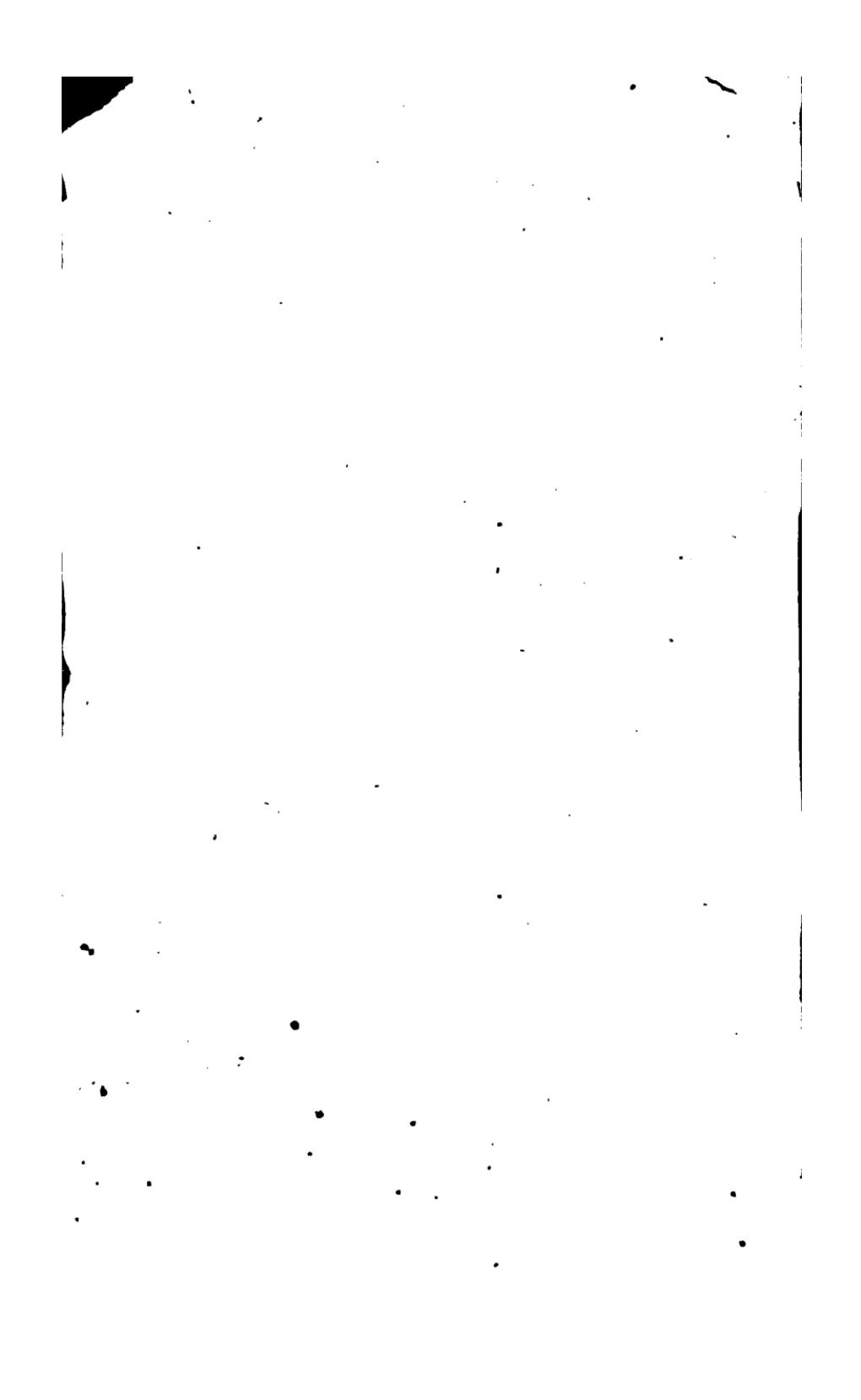
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VILLAGE BELLES.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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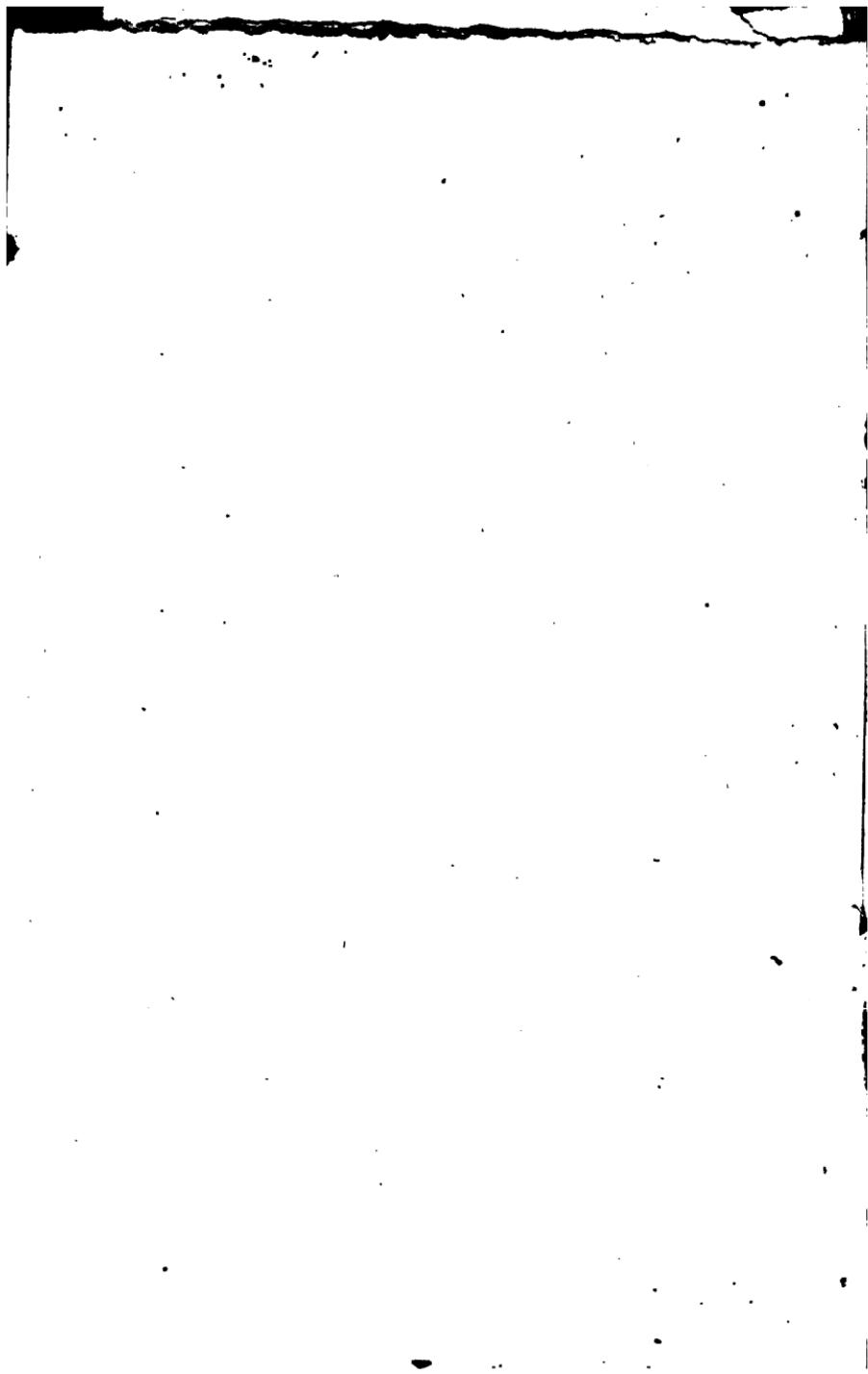
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VILLAGE BELLES.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

THE youngest of the two Miss Parkinsons, of Park-Place, amazingly disengaged her family by marrying the Reverend Henry Wellford, vicar of Summerfield, who had nothing on earth but good looks, good qualities, and four hundred and fifty pounds a year to recommend him. Alas! how did her father storm and rage, how did her mother fume and fret, how did aunt Diana congratulate herself that she had settled her thirty thousand pounds on Hannah, her eldest niece, how did the aforesaid Hannah sneer and observe "she had thought how it would end," and how did the good folks of Stoke Barton stare and sigh and shake their heads, and bless heaven that no poor vicar had ever fallen in love with any of *their* daughters! Catharine Parkinson, who had refused Sir Robert Bosanquet! Henry Wellford, who might have had rich Miss Trotter for asking! So unadvised of both parties—nobody was surprised at old Mr. Parkinson's shutting his doors for ever against the young couple; or wasted much thought on the fate of the fine young man and the beautiful girl after the first excitement of astonishment was over, except Dr. Pennington, the rector of Stoke Barton; and *he* was second cousin to Henry Wellford, so no wonder!

Miss Hannah, having exhausted her spleen on the subject of her sister Kate's imprudent match, found herself in her twenty-ninth year on the verge of old-maidism, with

'Nobody coming to marry her,
Nobody coming to woo;'

not even a poor vicar; and the subject was beginning to give her considerable uneasiness, when her father's heir-at-law, Mr. James Parkinson, who for many years had regularly visited Park-Place in the shooting season, came down for the





in a coarse apron, or a gown pulled through the pocket-hole, shelling peas or making a pudding; for Lady Worrall had no notion of a "parson's wife sticking up to be a fine lady." Indeed the character of a fine lady was the object of her supreme contempt; for though she piqued herself much on her ancient birth, being descended from the De Barneville that went on the first crusade," yet she considered it no degradation of her dignity to check her steward's accounts, look after her turkeys, scold the village children, and give Mrs. Wellford a receipt by word of mouth for that "heterogeneous combination of culinary ingredients" ycleped a hodge-podge.

The defunct Sir John Worrall had been something of a humourist. "Knowledge is power," said he, "the power of making one's self disagreeable." That he might not make himself disagreeable, he never opened a book after he became his own master; but devoted himself to the gratification of an extraordinary passion for bell-ringing. At first he used to practise in the parish church, but his constant peals disturbing the studies or the slumbers of Mr. Wellford's predecessor, a quarrel ensued between baronet and vicar, and Sir John set up an opposition belfry in his own grounds. Here he and his men servants amused themselves many a long hour; ding-donging the good people of Summerfield out of their senses, and wearing Mr. Greenway to a thread with low spirits, except when a north wind carried the noise to Hexley, and nearly put a stop to the business of the place. Sometimes they pealed, at other times they tolled; at length, Death, out of patience at so much tolling without any burials, took off Sir John. His relict sold the bells, and the campanile fell into decay.

Mrs. Wellford, from her cheerful, complying disposition, became a great favourite with the old dowager; a character which entailed on her so much vexatious interference that she was often led to regret its attainment, and could only be reconciled to it by the reflection that Lady Worrall, whom no affront could possibly force into indignant silence, would be ten times more noisily troublesome as an enemy than as a patronizing friend. She wondered that Henry appeared insensible to the annoyance, and was often momentarily provoked at the hearty cordiality of his "My dear Lady Worrall, how kind of you to look in upon us with so little ceremony!" Men have small sympathy with female vexations at being caught mending shirts or dressed in ginghams.

Beyond these trials, Mrs. Wellford had few that do not fall

to the lot of every housekeeper with a limited income and increasing family. She had occasionally a little difficulty in making both ends meet, but her husband smilingly reminded her that they were better off than Dr. Johnson's country friend, who brought up nine children on apple dumplings. Her boys and girls thrived admirably on their plain fare; and often did the traveller, whom the beauty of the scenery had allured to pass through Summerfield, pause to gaze on the picturesque group of healthy urchins hanging over the churchyard palings, or riding a rough-coated donkey in the adjoining shadowy lanes.

The news of old Mrs. Parkinson's death was communicated to her daughter through the friendly medium of Dr. Pennington, who had often unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a mitigation of the parental sentence. In less than a twelvemonth, old Mr. Parkinson followed his wife to the grave; and Hannah, after a fourteen years' silence, condescended to announce the misfortune to her sister. "There is no mention of you," she wrote, "in his will; but as he said that he forgave you on his death-bed, I see no impropriety in writing to you, and shall be glad to hear from you in return. Enclosed is a fifty-pound note for your mourning."

Mr. Wellford halted at the word "impropriety" with an angry "pshaw!" His wife, touched by softened remembrances of home, was sure poor Hannah meant kindly. She wiped away some natural tears, and lost no time in answering her sister's letter. The correspondence languished between them, however in spite of Mrs. Wellford's endeavours to keep it up; and some months had elapsed in silence when Mrs. Parkinson at length wrote to the following effect.

Park-Place, Stoke Barton;
May 20th.

DEAR SISTER,

I received yours of the 23d of February. I am sorry to hear Mr. Wellford was troubled with the tooth-ache when you wrote. Why does not he try nut-gall? Mr. Curtis says there's nothing like it. "Don't tell me," says he, "of tooth-ache—try nut-gall!" Aunt Diana is much the same in health as she used to be, but I think she ages very much. For all her fresh looks, I should not be surprised at her dropping off any day. Mr. Parkinson is uncommon well, though very deaf. As to myself, thought I look clear, I'm always ailing.

I'm sure I haven't known what it is to have a good night, I don't know how long. Mr. Curtis says he thinks I should be better for change of scene, and I think so too, for I am sick of Stoke Barton; but Mr. Parkinson does not like moving. I tell him he is an old man before his time, for he is as fixed in all his ways, and as much nailed to one place, as if he was seventy. However, I don't know, if it came to the push, whether I really could make up my own mind to stir, for there is so much vexation and trouble in travelling! and besides I don't know who I could comfortably leave behind, for Hawkins is uncommonly sly. There would be fine doings, I warrant. Open house-keeping, and what not.

I think it wears me a good deal hallooing to Mr. Parkinson, for he can't hear unless you raise your voice quite sharp, and yet he's always saying "don't speak so loud," and quite vexed to be thought deaf. I'm sure I often think you are very happy in having a large family about you; for Mr. Parkinson, being so hard of hearing, is no companion at all; and aunt Diana, you know, was never very entertaining. Do let one of your girls come and stay with me. I think it would amuse me; and if I take a liking to her, it shan't be the worse for her. The distance between us is only forty miles, and as I suppose you have a man, he will be quite a sufficient protection for her on the road. I should like my namesake best, but as you say she's so useful to you, I suppose you can't spare her, so let me have Rosina. Of course I shall keep her in clothes; and she will be in no want of toys, as there are my old dominoes and the doll's cradle that you may remember my poor father gave me at Brighton, besides the swing at the end of the walnut-tree walk. The Penningtons are very neighbourly, and desired to be remembered to you when I wrote. The doctor that was such a well-looking man when I married, is now stout and very red-faced, but the same high spirits as ever. Mrs. Pennington, to my mind, is too independent, almost insolent, I sometimes think, though to be sure she was of a very good family. The children are rude and noisy; and I am thankful our grounds are so large; as, having only a wall between them and the rectory garden, I am sure if we were closer my poor head would be split with their shouts of laughter. I think the doctor does very wrong to encourage them as he does in romping, noisy games. He'll rue it some of these days, it's my opinion. Perhaps it will give you some idea of my deli-

cate health, (though without any regular disorder,) when I tell you that Mr. Curtis sees me every day.

Compliments to Mr. Wellford, &c.

Your affectionate sister,

HANNAH PARKINSON.

Mr. Wellford had more than one sly laugh over this letter. "But really," interposed his sweet-tempered wife, "poor Hannah is very much to be pitied."

"For having five thousand a-year, my dear, or for having an apothecary that comes to see her every day? Which?"

"Oh! really now, Harry, you are too severe. It is a misfortune for weak persons to have a medical man who persuades them they cannot do without him. Poor Hannah seems to be in very ill health—"

"Though 'without any regular disorder,' my dear; remember the parenthesis."

"And then Mr. Parkinson's being so deaf—"

"Obliges his wife to wear out her lungs in screaming to him!—

"You are so *very* deaf, my dear!
What shall I do to make you hear?"

"Ha, ha, ha!—It is too bad of you, Mr. Wellford, to make me laugh. But, my dear, about the important part of this letter—"

"Ay, Mrs. Wellford, about the consignment of one of your fair daughters! Well, my dear?"

"Well, my dear!"

The vicar drummed on the table. His wife looked very melancholy.

"As to parting with our Hannah," said she, after a pause, "that is, as my sister says, quite out of the question. I could not possibly bear the separation; nor is she the sort of girl to be happy from home."

"Besides, my dear, Hannah relieves you from so many little fatigues, that I look upon her as quite necessary for your comfort, in the present state of your health. Nor should I know what to do without my young companion. It is one of my most exquisite pleasures to watch the development of her mind and assist in its culture."

"Rosina is too young to be removed from a mother's eye."

"And too noisy to please a formal, fidgetty aunt. Besides, I cannot lose my little romp."

"It will be much too hard a trial for us to part with either of our girls. To be sure, if my sister only wanted one of them for a month or so, we might bear the pain of the separation for the sake of affording pleasure, of which poor thing, with all her fortune, she does not seem to have much at present;—but, for an indefinite time! There, you see, is the rub."

At the word rub, Mr. Wellford began to rub his knee somewhat uneasily; and after a meditation of full five minutes, he re-commenced the subject with "The question in the present case, my dear Kate, ought not so much to be what is most agreeable to our own inclinations as what will be for the future advantage of the children. So long as I am spared to you, my income is sufficient for our moderate wants: but on my death I shall be able to leave you but a poor two-hundred-a-year, which will scarcely suffice for your own maintenance and that of our girls, while Matt and Harry will need some friend to help them in struggling through the world. Shall we then be quite justifiable in repelling the advances of a near relation who has it in her power, should the time of need arrive, to prove so valuable a friend to your children?"

"Oh, Henry," said Mrs. Wellford sighing, "you have placed the subject in so grave a point of view!"

"And does not the establishment of a child require grave consideration?" asked her husband.

"At any rate," rejoined she after sorrowfully ruminating, "it must not be Hannah."

"Well then, let it be Rosina," he replied. "They are equally dear to us, but Rosina is stout and healthy, and well able to make her way in the world. Shall I write to Mrs. Parkinson?"

"No, my dear, there is no hurry. I will write by and by, or perhaps to-morrow, which will be quite soon enough."

"Quite, quite, my dear love, and I am glad to be excused from the task, as I must go to see poor Betty Wilson, who is extremely ill."

Mrs. Wellford scarcely heard his parting words, but a moment after he had quitted the house, she recovered from her reverie, and desired one of her little boys to run after his papa and inquire whether he meant to drink tea at Mr. Greenway's that evening. Her sister's letter had made her forget the invitation.

Harry scampered back with an answer in the affirmative, and Mrs. Wellford was soon intent on household cares.

CHAPTER II.

DOMESTIC DISTRESSES.

THE letter which was to decide the fate of Rosina Wellford was not written for some time. Mr. Wellford on the day following the discussion with his wife, had a feverish attack, of which he at first made light, but which became sufficiently serious to confine him to the house. On the second day of his illness, he grew so much worse that Mrs. Wellford was alarmed and sent for Mr. Good, who no sooner beheld his patient than he pronounced his fever to have been caught of Betty Wilson, and advised Mrs. Wellford to send her children instantly beyond the reach of infection, offering to receive them beneath his own roof. She thankfully accepted the proposal. Hannah, however, now about thirteen years of age, earnestly implored leave to remain as assistant nurse. She had been in her father's room, she said, the whole of the preceding day, had often held his fevered hand in hers and felt his breath on her cheek ; therefore in all probability had either taken the infection already or was not liable to it. Mrs. Wellford consented, and the affectionate girl took her place at her father's bedside, held the cooling draught to his lips and pressed his burning forehead with her soft, cool hand. When, after a delirious night, he for a short time recovered his senses, he seemed uneasy at her presence, and asked why she was allowed to incur so much danger ; but her gentle answer satisfied him, and he soon was again insensible to any thing that passed around him. Poor Mrs. Wellford, beholding the rapid progress of the disorder, was so bewildered by grief as to be scarcely capable of acting rationally ; while Hannah, pale as death, but perfectly collected, moved to and fro with noiseless steps, fumigated the room, administered the medicines, and implicitly followed every direction which Mr. Good had given her mother in her hearing. It was strange and beautiful to see so young a girl made regardless of her own danger by intense affection, and preserving through the very intensity of that affection, the self-possession which enabled her to control her tears and perform every necessary office with the steadiness of an indifferent person. On the third day, Mr. Wellford breathed his last. He became sensible a short time before his decease, murmured blessings on his wife and daughter, and expired in their arms. Hannah, whom the

experience of a few days seemed to have matured into excellence, would now have abandoned herself to the wildest grief, had she not been awed into the restraint of her feelings by the speechless agony of her mother. All the simple arts of affection were used by her to rouse Mrs. Wellford from the stupor of despair; and when the unhappy widow at length burst into tears, Hannah found relief in sobbing on her bosom.

The loss of such a husband and father as Mr. Wellford, was irreparable: if sympathy could have healed the affliction of his family, their tears would soon have been wiped away, for every one loved and pitied them. It was soon necessary to leave the vicarage to make way for Mr. Wellford's successor; and as Mrs. Wellford had no wish to quit the neighbourhood, she took a large cottage in good repair on the skirts of Summerfield, the low rent of which was proportioned to her diminished means. It stood at the extremity of a pleasant lane in the valley behind the church, and was capable of being made a pretty residence under judicious direction. The grief and the bustle of moving being once over, every thing in their new home tended to subdue the sorrow of the widow and orphans to that tone of quiet regret which we would not, if we could, dismiss from our hearts after the loss of an estimable object. A few days after their establishment, the new vicar arrived, a Mr. Russell, whom every body was sure beforehand, they should dislike. This being the case, no wonder that many invidious comparisons were drawn, the first Sunday between him and Mr. Wellford. Mr. Greenway thought his sermon too flowery; Mr. Good too argumentative; while Miss Margaret Holland pronounced it a quarter of an hour too long; and Farmer Holland declared nothing but curiosity had prevented his falling asleep. Phœbe Holland had some hopes of his proving a marrying man in more senses than one; and from deciding at the first glance that he was "at least thirty,—oh, certainly, thirty or more," she gradually made more and more allowance for a staid turn of countenance, and set him down for six or seven and twenty. His person was pleasing, his manners gentlemanly and quiet. Every one soon liked him "very well," except the young Wellfords, and perhaps their mother.

CHAPTER III.

THE VICAR'S MENAGE.

WHEN Lady Worrall heard that Mrs. Wellford had taken John Pearce's cottage at the end of the blackthorn lane; she remarked that she feared the poor woman would find her less neighbourly than formerly, for that the hill, though very easy to come down, was mighty hard for her to climb up again. Perhaps Mrs. Wellford might have already derived a momentary satisfaction from the idea that this would be the case, though we will not suppose her to have chosen an abode in the valley for the express purpose of freeing herself from an interfering patroness; and indeed fourteen years of intimacy had so habituated her to the old lady's ways that she was not so sensible in this instance, as many woman might have been, of "the gain of a loss."

Curiosity induced Lady Worrall to brave the fatigue of the walk a few days after the widow's removal to the White Cottage, when she took occasion to find fault with the colour of the parlour walls, which she said might have been washed with a good buff at half the expense. Green indeed! There was too much green every where round them already. Green hedges, green trees, green fields—one would think they had sore eyes; and to be sure Mrs. Wellford's *did* look rather blood-shot. Buff would have been cheaper, and twice as cheerful.

Her ladyship took leave with a threat that she should not be able to call again for some time. However the morning after Mr. Russell's first sermon, she could restrain herself no longer, and posted down the lane to her old friend and favourite.

"A *very* promising young man," said she, as soon as she recovered her breath, "is our new minister. He dined with me yesterday after service, which I never could prevail on Mr. Wellford to do, and extremely to the purpose was his conversation, I assure you. I have no doubt he will do an amazing deal of good, and I am sure there is enough need for it. John Barton, in particular, is as hardened a sinner as ever lived, and your poor husband was not half sharp enough upon him. I took the opportunity of letting Mr. Russell into the characters of a great many of the most incorrigible of his flock, and I am persuaded he will lose no time in act-

ing upon the hints I threw out. Oh! I've ways and means of finding out a good deal that you would not give me credit for! The back window of my dressing-room, you know, commands a view of the White Hart, and I always make my Sally sit there at her work and tell me what idle fellows go in and out. There are some you would hardly suspect of drinking that pay pretty long visits there three and four times a week, squandering the money they ought to take home to their families! but I don't tell all I see to every body, only keep it hanging over their heads. How was it you weren't at church yesterday?"

"I could not make up my mind to the effort."

"Why, you took courage the Sunday before. To be sure, now that Mr. Russell is settled among us for good, it *will* be a trial, the first time you see him in the pulpit. But as it must come, first or last, I should think the sooner you get over it the better. Do you know whether old Harrison is out of employ yet? Mr. Russell asked if I could recommend him a gardener, for he said he could not bear that a spot which bore the marks of *feminine* care should run to waste. I told him Mr. Wellford always managed his garden himself; but he said he had not a turn for hoeing and raking, and hardly knew a cabbage from a cauliflower: so then I recommended old Joe Harrison, and said if he had him twice a week, that would be *quite* enough. I asked him if he meant to marry, at which he laughed and said no, he was a confirmed old bachelor. I said that was lucky, for that unless he stuck up to you, who were too old, or your daughter, who was too young, there was no choice for him, except among the Hollands, who, between ourselves, are too flighty. Besides, who are they? Quite below him in birth, any way; so that really —ha, ha,—if he ever *should* take matrimony into his head, I think his best chance would be with you, and then you know you could all go back to the vicarage."

"Oh pray, pray, Lady Worrall, if you have the smallest regard for my feelings, never——"

"Well, well, I won't; I was only in joke, but I see you are not able to bear that yet; and, seriously speaking he is much too young for you, for I asked him his age, and he said six and twenty. He looks more, and so I told him."

If Mr. Russell had been desirous of ingratiating himself with Mrs. Wellford, he might with reason have exclaimed, "Save me from my friends." Certainly with the most candid of dispositions, and every wish to do him justice, Mrs. Well-

ford's dread of seeing him, and antipathy to the mention of his name, were doubly increased by Lady Worrall's injudicious eulogiums, at the expense, as it were, of the dead; and more especially by her acknowledgment of having jokingly alluded to Mr. Russell of the possibility that the dead should ever be forgotten. The ensuing Sunday was looked forward to with pain: before it arrived, however, the new vicar thought proper to pay his respects at the White Cottage, and in spite of Mrs. Wellford's many prejudices against him, she felt her dislike thaw away under the influence of his mild, pleasing manners. He entered easily into conversation, spoke of their mutual friend Dr. Pennington, and of Stoke Barton rectory, which, it seemed, he had lately visited; praised the "bowery scenery" of Summerfield, then went on with English scenery in general, and compared it with that of Portugal, where he said he had spent the preceding winter with a beloved sister. Mrs. Wellford, noticing an expression of melancholy in his tone, inquired whether ill health had been the motive of the journey. "Yes," he said, "his sister had been in a decline, and a milder air had been recommended; but not even Cintra could save her. He was left alone in the world."

Mr. Russell then cleared his throat, and spoke of the noise, filth, and discomfort of Lisbon. There was nothing to make it desirable for an invalid, he observed, except the air. Were he in ill health, he should prefer taking his chance at home.

Abruptly quitting the subject, he noticed the pretty view of the church from the parlour window, and asked Hannah whether she did not think it would make a good sketch, and whether she drew. He then spoke of the lower order of his parishioners, and made several inquiries of Mrs. Wellford respecting their characters and wants. Mr. Russell had too much tact, to hint how sorry, he was sure, she must have been to have quitted the vicarage, but he expressed his delight at the beauty and neatness of his new residence, which he said he should have pride in preserving in its present tasteful order; offered to take Rosina on his knee, for which he was rewarded with a push, and asked Hannah for one of her clove pinks, which were finer than any in his own garden.

"I think, mamma," said Hannah timidly when their visitor was gone, "Mr. Russell seems a person whom we shall learn to like in time. At first I was almost sorry, and, I am afraid, rather envious when I heard people praise him—it seemed as if they were robbing papa of his rights. But now I begin to feel that we should be thankful he has been succeeded

by some one who can appreciate the good he did among the poor, and carry on his plans. How much more painful would it have been if a red-faced, hunting, sporting clergyman had been sent to us, like the rector at Hexley!"

"I dare say you are right, my dear," said her mother with a sigh.

Mr. Russell's character was in fact of a higher class than that of his amiable predecessor. With fewer shining qualities than Mr. Wellford, he possessed greater grasp of mind. He had fewer accomplishments, less *taking* manners, but stronger sense. He appealed seldomer to the passions and more to the understanding. To one accustomed to the sunshiny hilarity of Mr. Wellford's countenance and manner, Mr. Russell, especially while still suffering from a domestic calamity, necessarily appeared grave and reserved. His disposition was excellent, yet where Mr. Wellford would have acted from the spontaneous impulse of the heart, Mr. Russell often acted from principle. Mr. Wellford's disposition was essentially social: he had no higher enjoyment than that of conversing with his wife, his children, and his parishioners. Mr. Russell had greater sources of happiness within himself. It sometimes cost him an effort to lay down a favourite author and visit a sick cottager; but the volume *was* always closed and the peasant always visited; and the consequent glow of self-approbation amply repaid the exertion of rousing himself from luxurious indolence.

Mrs. Parkinson, who had written more than one condoling letter to her sister, now re-urged her sending one of the girls to Park-Place. Mrs. Wellford's spirits became very low at the thought of parting with any of the dear members of her diminished circle, and she long endured all the discomfort of irresolution; but recalling to mind her last conversation with her husband to whose sentiments and wishes she now attached a species of sacredness, she at length made up her mind to part with her little Rosina, and wrote the tardy answer to her sister's invitation. With fond self-deception, she avoided fixing any specific time, taking advantage of such phrases as "the next opportunity," "a trusty escort," &c.; but Mr. and Mrs. Good being summoned to London by the death of a relation that very week, they offered to deposite the little girl at Stock Barton in their way, and the proposal was too unexceptionable to be refused. The suddenness of the resolution prevented much time for regret: Rosina was in high spirits to the last moment, and it was not till the windows were

drawn up and the stage whisked through Summerfield, that the luckless little damsel began to roar at the top of her lungs.

Without minutely describing the adventures of a heroine in her eighth year, during the course of a forty miles' progress over a Macadamised road, it may be necessary to state that the evening of the same day saw her safely consigned to a powdered footman at the lodge of Park-Place. Rosina, with silent awe accompanied him to the house, beneath the portico of which stood a middle-aged gentleman who honoured her with a kiss, saying "So you are my little niece, are you? I am sure you seem a very nice little maid." Thence she was conducted to the drawing-room, where sat Mrs. Parkinson, and old Mrs. Diana. She was welcomed by the former with a delight such as a child might display at the acquirement of a new toy.

"And how is your mamma, love?" cried the lady, untying her niece's bonnet—"Lord, what a fine child! do look at her, aunt Diana."

Rosina was indeed well worth looking at. Her auburn locks, let them be combed or brushed which way they might, persisted in resolving themselves into spiral ringlets; her large laughing eyes were brilliant hazel, and her cheeks of the colour and softness of a peach. Mrs. Parkinson smothered her with kisses, and Mrs. Diana observed that she was "an uncommon fine child indeed."

"This evening, every body was pleasant and pleased. The next was not quite so agreeable. Rosina had been noisy all day, and in the afternoon had enticed her uncle to swing her in the garden. Mrs. Parkinson fretful at being deprived of a plaything of which she was nevertheless already becoming tired, summoned them in-doors: they returned in high spirits and renewed the romp in the drawing-room, and then she began to be jealous that Rosina, whom she had *got for herself*, should so visibly prefer the company of the gentleman. She declared she could bear such a noise no longer, so Miss Rosina was sent to bed.

After she was gone, Mr. Parkinson sat down, took up a newspaper which he had read before, and commenced the following dialogue with his wife.

"Well my dear, how did Mr. Curtis find you to-day?"

"He said, Mr. Parkinson, that I've a great deal of feverish heat about me, and am far from well."

"So far well. I am glad to hear it."

"Glad to hear what, Mr. Parkinson?" (raising her voice and speaking distinctly,) "He says I'm *far from well*."

"Oh, far from well—that alters the case; I'm sorry to hear it."

"I don't think you care much about it."

"What a sturdy little thing that Rosina is! it is astonishing what strength she puts out."

"That's no answer, Mr. Parkinson, to my observation."

"What observation, my dear? I did not hear you make any."

"No, I dare say not. Such a fine uproar as you have been making ever since tea! It would be just the same, I dare say, if I were dead."

"Deaf, my dear? no such thing."

"Dear me, Mr. Parkinson, who said you were, I said *dead*, not *deaf*."

"Oh! was it so? my dear, I am thinking that if you took as much pains to pronounce your consonants as your vowels, I should hear you perfectly well. You have got into rather an indistinct way of speaking, the last year or two."

"Well, I never——! To lay the fault of your hardness of hearing to my articulation!"

"My dear, I hear Rosina perfectly well."

"Yes, because she halloos."

"It does not appear so to me."

"Because you're deaf!"

"I'm sure her voice went through my head this evening," observed Mrs. Diana.

"Oh, and mine too. She's very lovely, certainly, but no one would take her for a gentleman's child. It will be the ruin of her if we continue to let her go on as she has done to-day. I must endeavour to bring her into some sort of order."

This was spoken in Mrs. Parkinson's ordinary tone of voice; and drawing her chair towards Mrs. Diana, she left her husband to enjoy his deafness and his newspaper together.

"Should not you call on Mrs. Pennington soon?" said Mrs. Diana.

"Yes, I think I ought, though I've a good mind to punish her for her abominable haughty independent manner, by staying away a little longer. What a terrible large family that is! To be sure the Doctor has a handsome income, but I can hardly imagine how he will provide for them all."

"Oh! the eldest son and daughter are settled."

"Yes, but then there are the two next girls nearly ready to come out, who most likely will not marry so well as Mrs. Ponsonby. Then there are Lewis and Marianne. I'm sure their father would do much better to send them to good schools than to bring them up at home, for they are very noisy, unformed young people. But there's so much talk of their superior education; and, when one goes there, one hears so much about experiments and air pumps and electrical machines, that it makes one quite sick. There did not use to be any of this nonsense when I was a girl. It was but last week the Doctor let them send up a fire balloon. I told him I thought it was very dangerous."

"Ah, they'll repent it some of these days," said Mrs. Diana.

"So *I* say," rejoined Mrs. Parkinson. "But, dear me, did you hear Mr. Curtis's story of Major Webster, that used to dine here in my father's time, dropping down dead? It was very shocking, really. He was not older than Mr. Parkinson, and much the same sort of looking man, of a full habit and florid complexion. I should not be surprised at his going off in the same way some of these days, for he has a great many of the symptoms Mr. Curtis mentioned, and so I said to Mr. Curtis; and he said if any thing of that kind *should* ever occur, the best thing would be——"

"For him to marry my widow," said Mr. Parkinson in his usual quiet voice.

"La! Mr. Parkinson," cried his wife, looking vexed and confused, "who would have thought of your hearing what we were talking about?"

"What *you* were talking about, my dear, you mean; for I did not perceive aunt Diana's lips in motion."

"Well, all I know, is," said Mrs. Parkinson, "that it's very disagreeable to live with a person that sometimes is deaf and sometimes is not."

"My dear, the fault is not in my deafness, which is never so great as you will persist in maintaining it is, but in your having got such a habit of speaking in a shrill key that you don't know when you are making use of it."

"I speak in a shrill key? Why, not long ago, you accused me of muttering."

"Only of speaking indistinctly, my love, which prevents my benefiting by your agreeable conversation, and then you fancy I am deaf."

"Well, there really is no pleasing you, one way or the other," cried Mrs. Parkinson very crossly, and retreating with a bed candlestick as she spoke; "I think, deaf or not deaf, you are enough to tire the patience of Job!"

CHAPTER IV.

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE.

THERE being no necessity for minutely tracing little Rosina Wellford's history during her abode at Park-Place, it need merely be stated that Mrs. Parkinson soon discovered her grievous mistake in supposing she could learn to be fond of children, and that the system of management pursued by her was such as to have a ruinous effect on her protégée's temper and happiness. Injudicious indulgence was shortly followed by injudicious severity, or rather by a course of petty thwartings and teasings as difficult to bear as the tyrannical exercise of power on a larger scale. One circumstance, indeed, meliorated Rosina's fate. Mrs. Parkinson, flimsily educated and without taste or talent for communicating or acquiring knowledge, was ill qualified to teach her charge more than she knew already; and a temporary illness induced her to accept Mrs. Pennington's friendly proposal that the little girl should be sent to the rectory every morning to take her lessons with Lewis and Marianne. Mrs. Pennington made the offer, in fact, more in compassion to the niece than the aunt; but Mrs. Parkinson found herself so much the gainer by three hours' daily quiet, that though she jealously commanded Rosina to return *the instant* lessons were over, she allowed the plan to be pursued after the ostensible motive for its adoption had ceased, satisfying her pride and her conscience by the reflection that it was no great favour from the Penningtons after all, as Mr. Wellford had been the Doctor's second cousin. Rosina regularly poured forth her woes in confidence to her sympathizing young companions, who deeply resented her wrongs, and looked upon Mrs. Parkinson as the greatest tyrant that ever lived. Commiseration, however, though it alleviated, could not heal her childish griefs; as she increased in years and understanding,

her dependent situation, instead of growing more endurable from habit, became more intolerable. A warm heart, warm temper, and quick apprehension, gave keener edge to the sarcasms which Mrs. Parkinson when in an ill temper, (and that was sometimes seven days in a week,) levelled at her mother and family—sarcasms, much harder to bear than the restraint on her activity and noisy spirits, which had formerly called forth her childish tears. There were other methods of making her feel dependent and degraded. Every year Mrs. Parkinson now made a point of sending her sister a silk gown; no very great gift, certainly, considering the affluence of her own circumstances; but unceasing were the allusions ostentatiously made in all companies to this annual present! “Ah! that is a pretty sarsenet of yours, Mrs. Pennington; just the colour of the last I sent poor sister Wellford—no, I think her’s was more of a slate—she has not long been out of mourning, you know, and in *her* circumstances, it’s best to have something that will hide the dirt. I didn’t buy her a figured one, because a plain silk will turn. I dare say she’ll make it last” (in a confidential tone) “till I send her another. I wish I could do more, but you know I have this girl to keep.”—“Mrs. Jones, may I trouble you for a pin? Ah, your pin cushion is off the same piece as a gown I bought yesterday for Mrs. Wellford, I do believe! You got the silk at Mr. Price’s, I dare say; ah, yes, four and threepence a yard, the very same.” It was almost as intolerable to be pointed out to every morning caller as “one of poor sister Kate’s children. A terrible large family!—left *quite* unprovided, so that she took her entirely out of charity.” Poor Rosina learnt “how salt is the savour of another person’s bread, and how hard it is to climb another person’s stairs.” Often the burning tears moistened her daily portion of needlework; and often they wetted her sleepless pillow as she lay thinking of the home, despised, as it seemed, by all others, but dear beyond measure to her who had been sent from it to prove the wretchedness of splendid dependence. Not unfrequently she was deprived of her only consolation, the society of the young Penningtons, till she had humbled herself for some real or imaginary fault, which, to a temper like hers, was gall and wormwood. Rosina attained her twelfth year, and her disposition appeared to be growing reckless and sullen. Her letters to her mother were always submitted to the censorship of Mrs. Parkinson, whose temper was not meliorated by

time, while Mr. Parkinson was of too passive a nature to attempt interference; and Mrs. Diana, if not so cross, was even more formal and fidgetty than her niece. Affairs at length came to a crisis. Rosina took an extraordinary resolution and acted upon it. She ran away!

Her aider and abettor in this daring step was Lewis Pennington. He it was, who, fired by the recital of her wrongs at a moment when her heart was full almost to bursting, declared that if he were in her place, he would endure such tyranny no longer, shewed the feasibility of a return to Summerfield, lent her a guinea to pay her coach hire, hailed the stage as it passed the shrubbery gate, saw her safely placed in it, wished her good luck and called out "all right." He returned to the rectory with a bold confidence of a boy of fifteen, not without a spice of mischief in his composition, and ready to endure whatever punishment might await him for having freed innocence from thraldom; while Rosina, terrified almost out of her senses at the hardihood of the enterprize, yet trembling with delight at her emancipation, shrank into one of the corners of the stage as it passed the lodge of Park-Place, and turned pale with alarm when it drew up at the inn to receive parcels and passengers. The door was abruptly opened, and she started, with the apprehensiveness of guilt, in the expectation of seeing some member of her uncle's household; but it was only the coachman, who jerked in a brown paper parcel and then remounted his box. They clattered over the bridge which separated Stoke Barton from the adjoining parish; trees, houses, and steeples faded in the distance; and the agitated girl began to hope that now, unless some very cross accident indeed should happen, she was beyond the reach of pursuit; but there was still sufficient uncertainty hanging over her fate to prevent her feeling comfortable. The possibility of her mother's displeasure haunted her mind, and by the time she had reached Summerfield, this source of apprehension had worked her up to such a state of agitation that, on entering the room where Mrs. Wellford and Hannah sat at tea, she could only reply to their eager and anxious inquiries by a torrent of tears. When at length she could speak articulately, she gave an account of all her grievances, the recapitulation of which again choked her utterance, and she murmured an almost inaudible request that her mother would not send her again to Park-Place.

"To Park-Place?" repeated Mrs. Wellford, whose cheek

glowed with hectic colour, "No, Rosina, did I even wish it, there is no likelihood that your aunt would receive you again. The doors of *that* house we may consider as closed against us for ever. You have certainly acted daringly and imprudently in taking so important a step as quitting a home in which your friends had placed you: however, that is past now and cannot be recalled. You have, I fear, been injudiciously treated, and now that we are once more united, no consideration on earth shall tempt me to consent to a second separation. It has been painful enough to both of us."

Tears fell from the mother's eyes, as she stooped to kiss Rosina's cheek. "I hope your future conduct will prove to me," said she, "that what has passed has been more attributable to adverse circumstances, and your aunt's imperfect knowledge of the management of children, than to the hastiness of your own temper."

Rosina sighed, and secretly resolved that whatever the faults of that temper had hitherto been, they should be seen no more; and now that the dreaded explanation had taken place, and she was received into favour, she had leisure to kiss Hannah again, and observe with wonder how much she was grown and improved.

Hannah was at this time between sixteen and seventeen; and like Thomson's rural heroine,—

"Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self."

It might be said of her features that they reminded you of the Grecian contour, though not strictly conformable to it; and they completely harmonized with the calm, pure, and chastened spirit that shone through them. Her countenance, if seldom radiant with vivacity, was generally smiling and tranquil; and her dark blue eyes, if they did not sparkle with genius, at least beamed with intelligence and sweetness.

Hannah was as much struck with Rosina's growth as Rosina was with Hannah's beauty; and now that "the absent had returned, the long, long lost was found," there was much to be told and inquired into on both sides. Rosina enjoyed the consciousness of being once more at home, though every thing looked very small to her, and her spirits rapidly rose, albeit her mirth was rather hysterical. She ran into the kitchen to see her old favourite, Betty; and Betty nearly recalled her lachrymose propensities by inquir-

ing "how in the world she came from Park-Place," but the choking in her throat soon subsided, and before her gossip was half at an end, she was called off by the sound of her brother Matthew's voice. Matthew, now a fine boy of fifteen, was serving his time with Mr. Good, under whose roof he lived, though he ran down to the White Cottage whenever he had an opportunity. He welcomed his younger sister with noisy joy, was inquisitive into the story of her wrongs, indignant at Mrs. Parkinson's ill usage, and pitied her so much that Rosina went to bed impressed with the pleasing conviction that she had been a heroine in distress. Mrs. Wellford saw the mischievous tendency of Matthew's commendations, and was sorry for it; but was more indignant at her sister's conduct than in Rosina's presence she had thought fit to express.

In the course of the following morning, Rosina ran in from the garden, exclaiming, "That tiresome Mr. Russell is coming down the hill!"

"Tiresome!" repeated Hannah with surprise, "nobody thinks Mr. Russell tiresome now."

"Dear me!" cried Rosina, "why none of us could bear him when I went away."

True, my dear," said her mother, "but that was because we did not know him. Mr. Russell is an excellent young man, and does great good among the poor."

"He may be very excellent," said Rosina, "but I'm sure he is not very young. However, here he comes."

Mr. Russell entered with several books under his arm. "Well, Hannah," said he, smiling, "here is Hayley's Life of Cowper for you at last. Good morning to you, Mrs. Wellford. Ah, Rosina, how do you do?"

All were surprised at the quietness of this last salutation. "Are you not astonished," said Mrs. Wellford, "to see Rosina among us once more?"

"No," said he, "I was astonished to *hear* of it; but news travels fast in country villages. Matthew looked in upon me on his return to Mr. Good's, and communicated the intelligence."

"She did not follow quite the usual routine observed by young ladies in setting out on their travels," said Mrs. Wellford.

"So I hear," returned Mr. Russell, looking gravely at Rosina, who felt rather abashed. After inquiring for his friends the Penningtons, he proceeded to talk about books, and one

Abel Trueman, a village prodigy, who had made some astonishing discoveries in mechanics; to the surprise and mortification of Rosina, who had expected him to shew some curiosity respecting her adventures. She thought him a more disagreeable person than ever, and wondered how Hannah could read his stupid books.

In the afternoon, a furious letter came from Mrs. Parkinson, accusing both Rosina and her mother of meanness, insolence, and ingratitude, saying that all Stoke Barton was crying out at Rosina's unheard of conduct, and that the young Penningtons were in high disgrace for having connived at her absconding. She added that this was the last time she would hold any communication with a branch of her family so wholly undeserving of her patronage.

Mrs. Wellford burnt the letter without shewing it to her daughters, merely telling them that their aunt Parkinson, as might naturally have been expected, was exceedingly angry.

Every one being now thoroughly well informed that Miss Rosina Wellford had run away from Park-Place and returned to Summerfield, she soon sank into the insignificance of a little girl of twelve years old, and quietly resumed her usual employments. In the course of a week, she received a letter from Marianne Pennington, in answer to one which her mother had allowed her to send in a parcel, remitting a guinea to Lewis. Marianne hoped she was well and had found her mamma and sister so likewise, and stated that both she and Lewis had been in sad disgrace, but were now forgiven. The rest of the epistle was about birds, flowers, and the French governess Mademoiselle Mackau. Thenceforward, as neither of the young friends had much money to expend in postage, the correspondence was renewed only at distant intervals.

CHAPTER V.

FEMALE ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

IT is sometimes possible to run away from a bad habit. An individual who in some particular circumstances is conscious he has deserved the reprehension of his acquaintance, has the

power and often the inclination, on entering a new society of commencing a reformation without the annoyance of its being generally known that reform is needed. He turns over a new leaf—in short, with a *volti subito*. This was partly the case of Rosina, who, conscious of her faults of temper, resolved that they should never betray her now that she was once more in her dear home where every one was kind and good-humoured. The acting on this prudent determination, together with her mother's gentle system of management, and the infrequency of temptation, effected a considerable improvement, though her faults were yet far from being eradicated. Inconsideration both in speaking and acting was the failing which oftenest required her mother's correction; and, next to this, a want of application to any pursuit when it ceased to be amusing.

Rosina had been so well grounded in the elements of many feminine accomplishments by the Penningtons' Parisian governess, that it only required her own diligence to attain excellence in almost any pursuit she chose to undertake; and Mrs. Wellford was very anxious that she should adhere to the plans already commenced with so much success. Rosina's *style* in every thing she undertook bore an accurate likeness to her own disposition. Her handwriting, for instance, was more free than is usual at her age, but wanting in neatness. Her drawings were bold, sketchy, and incorrect. She would often cover a sheet of paper with odd groups of knights errant, ladies, pages, squires, and long robed signors, which reminded one of Cervantes, or Ariosto, or Spenser's Fairy Queen, and which excited wonderful admiration and pleasure in the mother and sister; but on examination it was generally found that one had no neck, another's head was twisted hind part before, arms and legs were put on where they were never known to grow, some were standing in the air, and others so aslant that it was impossible they should keep their balance—faults by no means uncommon in the hit-or-miss school. On their being pointed out by the matter-of-fact critics, Rosina generally observed that "it was much easier to give advice than to mend;" an undeniable fact;—and that "she was tired just then, but would correct the faults another time;" which time never came. With respect to music, again, Rosina had a sweet voice, quick finger and excellent ear, and could play off any easy piece at sight; but her execution wanted finish. At Summerfield, indeed, she had not much opportunity of keeping up her practice; for she had left

all her music behind, and the only instrument in the house was an old square piano-forte, which her father had bought, years ago, for fifteen pounds at a sale. On this divine instrument Rosina flourished over all the lessons she could recollect in the absence of her notes; and if she stuck in the middle of a troublesome variation, she changed the key, and went off to something else; till she was completely tired of all her old tunes. Lady Worrall then lent her half a dozen heavy volumes of Handel, Gluck, Piccini, &c., half of which were unintelligible, being printed in score. Mrs. Good also rummaged out some reels and country dances and a collection of Vauxhall songs; but even with the free use of these, Rosina's music soon came to a stand.

Hannah had no claim to the title of "an accomplished young person." Music she had never had an opportunity of learning, and she had a taste, rather than a genius for drawing. She was fond of botany, and sometimes endeavoured to copy the outline of a flower in pencil; but her attempts, though neat, were cramped. Her hand was not what artists call "sufficiently untied." But in the culture of her garden-flowers, in long rambles among the green bowery lanes and over the spirit-reviving heath, in needlework, and in reading, Hannah found sufficient resources without the assistance of music or painting. Her threaded steel was remarkably felicitous in its execution of

"buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn;"

and her delicate hemstitch and satinstitch formed the only ornament of her neat and simple dress. Poetry was a source of keen enjoyment to her; not indeed the love-rapine-and-murder school, of which no specimens had come to her knowledge, but the descriptive, contemplative, and moralizing class of writers, among whom may be instanced, as two of her bosom favourites, Thomson and Cowper. She had also enough mind to understand and delight in Milton. At first her reading was confined to the often turned over volumes of her father's moderate collection; but in after-times, Mr. Russell, whose study shelves were amply furnished with standard works, and who subscribed moreover to a town library, continually supplied her with a change of useful and amusing literature. Hannah understood French perfectly when she read it to her-

well, but having principally learnt it *by sight*, was diffident of her accent. Rosina, on the contrary, had always had a mortal aversion to grammars, French or English; but her excellent ear had enabled her completely to catch the Parisian pronunciation of Mademoiselle Mackau, who had insisted on French being invariably spoken in school hours. She therefore gladly abandoned her needlework to read Voltaire's *Charles XII.* and *Pierre le Grand* to Hannah every afternoon, as long as they lasted.

In so confined a neighbourhood as Summerfield, of course there was not much change of society; but in the small round of visits which were periodically exchanged, Mrs. Wellford was always accompanied by her daughters. Lady Worrall loved a game at whist, and generally invited the Goods and Mrs. Wellford every week or ten days to make up a rubber. On these occasions Mr. Russell, though he never played cards, sometimes looked in and chatted with the girls at their work, or challenged one of them to a game of chess. Mrs. Good and Mrs. Greenway also, had little tea parties, which sometimes concluded with a dance; and at Farmer Holland's there were famous syllabubs out of doors in the summer, and all sorts of noisy Christmas games in the winter. Such was the *gaiety* of which Hannah and Rosina partook; and in the daily exercise of their domestic occupations, months and years followed each other, productive of much peaceful enjoyment and leaving little mark behind, while the future promised to be as much like the past as possible. Nobody seemed to alter or grow much older, except the young; there were few deaths and fewer marriages. Mrs. Wellford at forty was as clear and delicate looking as she had been ten years before, and Lady Worrall seemed to wear as well as her everlasting brown satin pelisse. The three Miss Hollands, who had formerly been *village belles*, were still single, and had gradually become stout, buxom, middle-aged women, retaining all the good humour and hilarity of their youth. There seemed every prospect of the two Miss Wellfords likewise spending their existence in single blessedness; a prospect which Hannah, at the calm age of two and twenty, contemplated with the most perfect composure, though Rosina, on the borders of seventeen, considered the subject with rather more impatience. Frequent consultations with her looking-glass, which told her that she was an extremely pretty girl, had awakened in her a certain portion of vanity. This had as yet little opportunity of displaying itself, save in the somewhat self-complacent ex-

pression of her countenance, and the janty way of putting on her bonnet; though in after times it involved more serious results. She was devotedly attached to Hannah, and now and then fretted herself a little that so much beauty and sweetness should be wasted on the desert air; but in vain she invoked the heroes of ancient and modern romance, for, like Glendower's spirits, they did not come when she did call for them. At one time, from the frequency of Mr. Russell's visits, she really began to suspect him of intending to make Hannah an offer, on which she immediately discovered him to be endowed with a thousand good qualities to which she had heretofore been blind. He was not so very old, after all, and certainly not at all old bachelorish in his ways! But the offer was not made, and Rosina wondered how she could have changed her opinion of him, for he was just the same prosy good sort of a man as ever. Then he began to pay Rosina more attention than formerly, seemed suddenly aware that the "young lady" was rising into the "young woman," took the liberty of telling her of a few of her faults, at first playfully, then seriously; was evidently much gratified by her improving on some of his hints, and vexed and even cross at her slighting his advice on some other points. What could all this interest in her character mean? He had become such an habitual visitor at the White Cottage, that it was looked on as something remarkable if two days passed without seeing him. Was it possible that Rosina could be the attraction? That was too ridiculous;—yet it was better, at least more entertaining, for a man to be even ridiculous than merely solemnly stupid. There would be some *éclat* in refusing him; all the village would know it, and be astonished at her, and pity him. Nay, the poor man was so *affable* that she really believed she should pity him herself! Poor Mr. Russell!

However, poor Mr. Russell continued to eat, drink, and sleep as well as usual, quite unconscious of the bold step that was expected from him; and Rosina felt half ashamed of herself for having indulged in such silly and improbable speculations. It was plain that he was in love with neither of them; most probably he had been disappointed in early life. There was no one else whom even her fertile fancy could convert into a hero. An old college friend, indeed, of Mr. Russell's, one Dr. Black, was occasionally known to be at the vicarage, and he even drank tea at Lady Worrall's and Mrs. Wellford's, but this man Rosina particularly detested. It was to no purpose that Mr. Russell bespoke favour for him

on the score of his amiability, his deep learning, and varied powers of mind—he had a grating voice, a figure not unlike that of Dr. Syntax, a pair of legs in every body's way; he dissolved nine lumps of sugar in every cup of tea, played with keys, scissars, or whatever lay within his reach while speaking, and sometimes, in his fits of abstraction, dropped the aforesaid keys or scissars into his immense pocket. It was impossible to endure Dr. Black. Then, the Hollands were visited by occasional troops of odd looking cousins from London, whose manners even Rosina's inexperience knew to be underbred; and Mr. Good had two nephews in the next market town, one articled to a solicitor, the other an usher in a public school, who dined with him every Sunday, and as often on week days as he thought proper to invite them. Sam, the articled clerk, was pert and disagreeable; Edwin, the usher, pale and pragmatical. Neither could, by any stretch of fancy, be coaxed into heroes, though they did tolerably well for partners in an occasional dance. So with the conviction that in due time, she and Hannah would add two to the much abused sisterhood of old maids, Miss Rosina Wellford was obliged to remain contented.

CHAPTER VI.

A BACHELOR'S TEA TABLE.

MAN is an ambulatory animal. He walks to and fro, whether to digest his thoughts or his dinner, either in his study, in his garden, on his terrace, or wheresoever fate is kind enough to afford him room for stretching his legs. The Greeks and Romans were luxurious people. They had actual ambulatories built of marble, sheltered from the weather, and adorned with pillars and statues.

The Reverend William Russell was not so well off—his library was fourteen feet by sixteen, without deducting for the bookcases; and five strides brought him from one extremity to the other, even if he took the diagonal of the square. So he bought himself a library chair; and when his thoughts required shaking, he stepped out into the churchyard, where there was a lime-tree walk.

Summerfield church, if either has or ought to have been stated, stood on the brow of a hill. When Mr. Russell passed through the little garden gate which opened into the church-yard, he might, if he turned to the right, behold a very pleasing prospect. Towards the east was seen the steep straggling street which composed the village, a confused and picturesque mixture of white-washed and red-brick tenements, projecting gable-ends and tall chimney-stacks, beneath elm, poplar, and horse-chesnut trees; Lady Worrall's grounds rising immediately behind, and in the extreme distance, a range of chalk hills, at the foot of which ran the high road.

Yet towards this view, pretty as it was in itself, Mr. Russell seldom turned when leisure allowed him to chose between his right hand and his left. On the south side of the church-yard lay his favourite gravel walk shaded by limes, where he could digest the secondlys and thirdlys of his sermon, or pause to gaze in pleased reverie on the scene below. The valley on this side was deeper than that towards the village, and completely shut in by a chain of hills. The scenery was essentially rural, not a single habitation being in sight, though the smoke from Mrs. Wellford's chimney rose from behind a clump of trees. The valley was intersected by a stream, and chiefly used for pasture. In one spot, therefore, might be seen a Cuyp-like group of cows either grazing or standing mid-leg in the water, while at a little distance, a snow white flock of sheep cropped the grass: and the milkmaid's call and the shepherd boy's whistle were in perfect harmony with the accessories of the picture. Occasionally too, Hannah might be seen watering the flowers in the neat garden, which, though closely hedged, was from the height on which the churchyard stood, completely overlooked; and in the perfect stillness which reigned around might even be heard the distant tone of Rosina's girlish voice as she sat at her work beneath the walnut-tree.

Such was the scene which Mr. Russell loved full well to contemplate, and which, one fine July evening, after some hours of close study, he stepped forth to enjoy. The valley was in all its beauty; the sun threw its slanting beams on the varied green of the foliage and the rich purple of the distance; the milkmaid in her red petticoat and white apron, was driving home her cows and singing as she went, the shepherd-boy was peeling a willow wand and whistling loud and clear; "the insect world were on the wing," and the air was loaded with happy sounds of life. Hannah too, in her

white gown, was sitting beneath the walnut-tree, apparently sympathizing with the feelings which made Dr. Paley exclaim, "It is a happy world after all!" and Mr. Russell's eyes, after taking the circuit of the valley, were gradually returning to dwell on its gentle heroine, when he became aware that another was also drinking in its beauties.

On a grassy bank at a short distance from the church-yard and rather below it, commanding a view of Mrs. Wellford's cottage as well as of the surrounding country, sat a young man very intently engaged in drawing what was probably a sketch of the scene before him, as he frequently regarded it attentively for a few minutes and then resumed his occupation. The bold, rapid motion of his hand and arm conveyed the idea of a masterly touch, yet he seemed dissatisfied with his success, for he now and then paused, shook his head, and wistfully reconsidered the prospect. Mr. Russell, who was unable to see his face, judged him from his figure and occupation to be a stranger; and after watching his movements a little while with considerable interest, had enough of the Paul Pry in his composition to open the gate and walk towards him: perhaps he thought it might be Turner or Glover. As he approached from behind, the young stranger all at once gave up his attempt, changed his position to one of entire unconstraint, and threw his sketch-book on the grass, so that Mr. Russell nearly stumbled over it. Footsteps, and a little exclamation scarcely amounting to a word, made the artist aware of his vicinity; he started from his luxurious half-incumbent position, and stretched out his arm to remove the impediment, with a good-natured "I beg you pardon."

"No pardon is necessary, sir—Allow me—" said Mr. Russell, stooping to assist him to collect numerous little scraps of paper which fluttered from the leaves of the sketch-book, some of which he honourably took pains not to see were poetry.

"Pray do not trouble yourself, sir—I am an awkward fellow," said the stranger, scrambling together the fugitive pieces.—"I am infinitely obliged to you"—as the last of the covey, evidently a fine drawing, was restored by Mr. Russell.

"I wish," said the vicar smiling, "I could be bold enough to hope that my little service might be rewarded by a sight of the tantalizing waif I have had the pleasure of restoring."

The young man gave him a good-humoured but searching look, with a pair of brilliant black eyes. "Oh, certainly, if you wish it," returned he, after bestowing a second glance on

his drawing—" You guess it, I suppose, to be a view of the valley before us. You are welcome to see the sketch, though I fancy it is very different from what you expect to find it."

Mr. Russell eagerly examined the drawing which was held out to him ; and to his great surprise, beheld not only a view of the scenery immediately surrounding the White Cottage, but Hannah herself seated on her garden-chair beneath the tree. A few clever touches had given the easy outline of her figure and the general form of her simple drapery ; and imagination easily supplied the profile of the sweet and thoughtful face resting on her hand, beneath the graceful braiding of her light brown hair.

" That figure *comes in* well, I think ?" said the artist interrogatively.

Mr. Russell looked at it long and intently ; at length he replied with an accent of much pleasure, " Yes she *comes in well*, as you say. You have caught the lady's resemblance, sir, even better than that of the scenery ; and I may say in the words of Milton,

' Much I the place admire ; the person more.'

Your representation of place and person, I mean. It is excellent."

" Odd enough," cried the young man with a delighted look, " that the same, or nearly the same passage should have occurred to both of us ! It was but a minute ago that I was silently applying to myself the beautiful simile which immediately follows the line you have just quoted. You doubtless remember it ?"

Mr. Russell looked as if he did *not* remember it ; and the artist with at least as much energy as the occasion required, repeated the following lines—

" ' As one who long in populous cities pent
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing, on a summer's day ; to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound,—
If chance with nymph-like steps fair maiden passe,
What pleasing seemed, through her now pleases more ;
She most, and in her look sums all delight.' "

" Imagine, sir," continued the enthusiastic speaker, after

having very pleasingly enunciated this difficult passage,— “Imagine, sir, the force with which these lines must be felt by a man passionately fond of nature in all her varied forms, compelled by his profession to pass half the year in the feverish excitement and pestiferous atmosphere of London, and who, escaping at length from his bondage, plunges into the country and comes all at once on such a scene as this!”

“It must indeed be delightful,” said Mr. Russell.

“It is almost intoxicating!” exclaimed the stranger, who paused, apparently inclined to laugh at his own warmth of expression. He tied the strings of his portfolio, and added in a more temperate tone, “I assure you that when I sprang off the coach-box half an hour ago, and strolled into the church-yard to look about me while the horses were changing, the view, which unexpectedly presented itself, filled me with such delight that no words could have given expression to my feelings. Being without aim or object, except to find subjects for my pencil, I hurried back to the inn, took my portmanteau from the stage, and resolved to remain here till I had exhausted the resources of the neighbourhood. Perhaps you, who appear a resident in this part of the world, can tell me how soon that period is likely to arrive.”

“We have abundance of fine scenery around us,” said Mr. Russell, “and I think it will be some time before you will complain of want of materials for your pencil. Meanwhile, if my services are worth acceptance as a cicerone”—

“Thank you,” replied his new acquaintance, “I shall gladly avail myself of your kindness. I am, as you may have guessed from my sketching, an artist.”

“From the *excellence* of your sketching,” said Mr. Russell, “May I have the pleasure of knowing——?”

“Huntley, sir,” said the young man, a second time forestalling him—“My name is Huntley. . You may probably have seen my father’s name in the papers, some years ago—an officer who distinguished himself in the American war. He has long been dead.”

Mr. Russell did not recollect the name of Captain Huntley, till the stranger reminded him of some striking circumstances which instantly brought to his memory that officer’s unavailing bravery and melancholy death. Pleased with the rencontre, and with the naïveté which had led the young artist to speak thus unreservedly of himself and his connections, he invited him to drink tea at the vicarage.

The invitation was accepted as frankly as it was given.

Mr. Huntley put his portfolio under his arm, and before he turned away, gave a parting look at Mrs. Wellford's cottage. "That is a pretty little place," said he—"I can hardly tell what to make of it. In spite of its roses, hollyhocks, and garden-seats, I should set it down for the tenement of some small farmer, or bettermost sort of labourer; and yet the lady—"

"*Is* a lady, I assure you," said Mr. Russell; "that cottage is inhabited by the widow and orphans of an excellent man who was my predecessor in the vicarage."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Huntley—"Have I then been sketching a lovely young Lavinia?

"She with her widowed mother, feeble, old,
And poor, lived in a cottage far retired.—"

"No! Miss Wellford's mother is still a pretty woman, and neither in ill health, neglected, nor sunk in poverty."

Mr. Huntley laughed, and followed his new acquaintance to the vicarage. "This is more like an adventure," cried he with animation, "than one often meets with in these steam-engine days, when minds and roads are equally Macadamized."

On entering Mr. Russell's parlour, his quick eye instantly glanced round to discover whether it were decorated by any specimens of art. A little miniature of Fanny Russell, the young woman who had died at Cintra, a fine engraving from Da Vinci's Last Supper, and another of the Madonna della Seggiola, were all that met his view. The new publications which lay on the window-seat afforded a more fertile subject of conversation, and by the time Mr. Russell had manufactured his bachelor's essence, the two acquaintance seemed to understand each other's minds as well as if they had been intimate for years. They trod the classic field together, and discussed men, morals, and manners. Thence they diverged to the arts. Huntley asked his new friend if he had seen the last Exhibition.

"No," said Mr. Russell. "Strange as it may seem to you, during the ten years I have held this vicarage, I have only visited London three times, and always on business."

"That does seem strange.—How a man with talents and tastes such as appear to be yours should be content to vegetate in a country place like this, pretty as it is, seems hardly so extraordinary as,—pardon me,—that in such a confined

neighbourhood you should preserve such freshness and vigour of mind. How have you prevented your colloquial powers from rusting?"

"Nay, sir, you compliment—it is likely enough that they *have* a little rust: a country parson has too many allurements to slovenly indolence to be always proof against temptation; yet strange to say, though self-indulgence generally grows upon us, I am far less insensible to the claims and pleasures of society than I was some years ago. When I first came, here, I had a morbid delight in solitude; it was the greatest of luxuries to me to shut myself up with my books, and to brood over them and my own melancholy speculations. Death had recently broken up the beloved circle which in old times had gathered round my father's hearth. However, I convinced myself at length that this yielding to regret was not only weak but inexcusable; I looked abroad among my flock, and found many members of it more companionable than I had at first supposed. Few of them are very refined, I grant—but when we take to study human nature as a science, all varieties of it have something interesting or entertaining."

"As have all varieties of the human countenance," said Huntley. "I never saw a face yet, however vulgar or ordinary, the study of which might not benefit a painter."

"Pray, Mr. Huntley, do you make landscape or figures your study?"

"Oh, I belong to the historico-picturesque school. That may be termed, you know, the melo-drama¹ of painting. Nothing comes amiss to me—houses, men, women, children, animals, old ruins, shattered trees, gipsy tents, antique furniture,—all turn to account in some way or other."

"You speak very enthusiastically of your profession."

"Is it not a profession to demand enthusiasm? Only think of the stores of mind and memory that must be brought to it, if we would pursue it with a hope of success; only think of the manner in which it clarifies the vision to every thing that is grand and beautiful! A painter must have all the knowledge of history and anatomy that books and professors can teach, together with an originality of combination, (for invention is nothing more,) that never can be taught; he must understand moral as well as physical anatomy—I mean the different forms in which passions express themselves, so as to be able to represent human beings under their influence. What laborious thought and practice this supposes! And when

labour has won the victory, there remains the business of hiding the traces of that labour—the raking over the ploughed clods, to make all look finished and even. What says Tasso?

‘L’arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre.’

Is not enthusiasm necessary to carry a man through all this? Talking of the anatomy of the mind, what incomparable opportunities, sir, must your Roman Catholic brethren have of attaining a knowledge of it through the medium of confession! What must it be to see man’s heart laid bare to the view! to hear all the impulses and suggestions that led to crime described with the eloquence of remorse!—Pretty young penitents, on the other hand, showing their purity of mind by their contrition for some venial fault—some harmless piece of coquetry, or trick played on the old duenna!—Truly, it would be amusing enough to have a week’s play at father confessor?”

“Taking his own fasts and penances into consideration?”

“Why yes, I think so.—He quits his hard pallet before daybreak, with less reluctance, of course, than if it were of eider-down, joins a procession of his brethren, which, if he have the smallest taste for the picturesque, must be very gratifying to his imagination, accompanies them to a splendid chapel, hears a mass of the most divine music, adores some master-piece of Raffaelle or Correggio, then retires again to his cell to whip himself with a small knotty cord, which is the least agreeable part of the business, I grant, though it must be remembered that the degree of severity with which he inflicts the stripes is entirely optional; and some we may guess, wield the scourge with considerable gentleness. Then comes his breakfast! A glorious one, nine times out of ten, it is, and even if it be a fast day, one may have something worse than fish. After breakfast, he and a brother monk take a walk; and if we may judge from Pinelli’s etchings, they do not object to stop before a puppet-show, a saltarello, or whatever amusement may be going on. They say “benedicite” to every pretty contadina, come home to a second mass, carry the host, perhaps, to some dying sinner, in a marble palace, dine, and sing mass again. Then for his afternoon amusement, our monk steps into his confessional, where a second Schedoni possibly comes to afford him ten times the excitement of Mrs. Radcliffe’s best novel, or without being a second

Theodosius, his vanity is gratified by the confessions of a Constantia."

"Still, Mr. Huntley, custom——"

"Oh, sir, your servant!—I only said for a week."

A pause now ensued, such as the most clever and talkative cannot always prevent; which was broken by Mr. Russell's asking Huntley whether he were acquainted with a young painter, a kinsman of his, by name Frank Russell.

"Do I know honest Frank?" cried Huntley gaily—"Frank Russell, the most industrious of punsters, the idlest of students, the prince of good fellows? Not to know him would argue myself unknown. He is to be found, manufacturing mirth in every studio."

"Your description of him is likely enough to be exact," said Mr. Russell, "and accounts, I am afraid, for his not making any very rapid advance in the arts."

"I will tell you the secret of Frank's slow progress, sir. He does not want talent, but he is in too easy circumstances. He wants poverty, to make him a good painter. Nothing like a little starvation, or the dread of it, to spur genius. So long as he does not depend on the sale of his pictures for his daily bread, he will not care that no one offers to buy them. He only puts his hands in his pockets and laughs. Tell him that he has committed some egregious fault in drawing, and he replies that it does not signify. He copies well. He makes a fine show at the British Gallery, where he generally chooses some picture that has plenty of background. Background is his *forte*—a Rembrandt with only a nose and a triangular piece of cheek standing out from a mass of black, suits him exactly. He once set about an original historical composition on a large scale. So sanguine was he of success that before the group was half painted in, he bought an expensive frame for it. Afterwards, he became dissatisfied with his work, thought it too diffused, painted out the subordinate figures, and contracted the principal mass till nothing but a little island of light remained. On this his vast ocean of back-ground gradually encroached till the little island was finally swallowed up, and nothing but a large mass of blackness was left. Meanwhile, Frank had invited some professional friends to sup with him, so nothing else would suit the whimsical fellow than to mount this total eclipse without sun or moon into his magnificent frame. Every one, of course, no sooner saw it than they were convulsed with laughter; and their mirth was increased by his gravely telling them that it was an allegorical

piece, representing the moral darkness of the Gentile world. He placed it in the same class with Correggio's 'Notte.' Poor Frank! notwithstanding his weakness for backgrounds, he is a very talented, as well as gentlemanly fellow—every body likes him; and there is more beneath the surface than many suppose. Though the waves are frothy, the ocean is deep."

Before Mr. Russell and his new acquaintance parted for the night, an arrangement was made for their visiting the remains of an old monastery at a few miles' distance on the following day. The appointment was kept; the weather, the scenery, and the associations connected with monastic ruins conspired to kindle Huntley's enthusiasm and render him a more agreeable companion than before. They again met in the evening, and drank their coffee at the large lattice window of Mr. Russell's study, through the open casement of which came the mingled perfume of sweet-briar and mignonette.

"I like the air of this old vicarage exceedingly," said Mr. Huntley. "Though not positively picturesque in itself, it becomes so from the scenery in which it is embowered, and the graceful mantle of trailing plants flung over it."

"The vicarage owes the latter attraction," said Mr. Russell, "to those who were prevented from reaping the reward of its beauty. Mrs. and Miss Wellford planted the clematis and sweetbriar just before I came to enjoy the improvements which resulted from their taste."

"Miss Wellford?" repeated Huntley. "That was the young lady we met to-day in the lane."

"No, her elder sister. When I first came here and saw so many minute evidences of care and orderly arrangement on every side, I could hardly help considering myself a supplanter; and felt something like remorse when I beheld an orphan family thrust into a cottage scarcely superior to that of a common labourer, that I, a single man, might sit down surrounded by superfluity of room."

"That must have been a painful feeling to a generous mind. But are the family you speak of reconciled to the change in their situation?"

"Completely, I believe, so far as pecuniary circumstances are concerned. Their tastes, refined and yet simple, are fully satisfied; and the universal rush and struggle for wealth and luxury is never more surprising to me than when I have just been witnessing how much happiness is compatible with an income as limited as theirs. Mrs. Wellford has always pre-

served the respect that was originally her due as the vicar's wife; and, from my being unmarried, has never had occasion to relinquish the duties of that station. She is a very charming woman."

"Tastes refined and yet simple?" repeated Mr. Huntley, after musing on the vicar's description. "How seldom they are to be found! I should be curious to see union of refinement and simplicity."

"Come," said Mr. Russell with more than usual alertness, "what say you a visit to the White Cottage? I should like to show you that the union does not exist merely in my own fancy. You robbed the Miss Wellfords of their guest last night, so it but fair that this evening they should have two."

"With all my heart," said Huntley, quitting his seat with alacrity. They accordingly left the vicarage together.

CHAPTER VII.

AN A. R. A.

ROSINA, in her morning walk, had encountered Mr. Russell and Mr. Huntley. The former, without offering to introduce his companion, had merely smiled and said, "good morning, Rosina," leaving her to marvel exceedingly as she proceeded down the lane, who the intelligent looking young man could be by whom he was accompanied. She had heard of a Mr. Frank Russell, and of a younger brother of Dr. Black's. But there was as much dissimilarity between Mr. Russell's old crony and this young unknown as between black and white. She was sorry she had on her old bonnet, and on her return home related to her mother and sister what she persisted in calling "the adventure."

"Really, Rosina," said Hannah, much amused, "I cannot call your passing Mr. Russell and probably some cousin or college friend of his, much of an adventure."

"You may laugh," said Rosina, "but seldom as we see a new face in Summerfield, it is a kind of adventure nevertheless."

In the evening as she was reading beneath her favourite walnut-tree, Rosina heard animated voices in the lane, and

recognized the tones of Mr. Russell. Guessing that he was coming to call on her mother, accompanied by his unknown friend, she started up without exactly knowing why, and leaving her book on the seat, ran into the house. In another minute she perceived through the parlour casement that the two gentlemen were actually in the garden, and communicated the remarkable intelligence to her mother and sister, feeling very thankful that she had put on her jaconet frock instead of her cambric-muslin.

As they passed the garden seat, Huntley pointed to the book Rosina had forsaken in her flight, and which had a sprig of myrtle between its leaves; saying with something of Charles Kemble's expression in *Hamlet*,—

“Do you see nothing there?”

“Yes, indeed do I,” cried Mr. Russell, taking up the volume, “I see my Greenfield's *Essays* lying out of doors exposed to the chance of bad weather or theft, for which I shall take the liberty of scolding Miss Rosina.”

Accordingly he entered the parlour with the accusing witness in hand, exclaiming, “So Rosina, this is the way you treat my books!” Huntley's introduction then took place, and while Mrs. Wellford was receiving his prefatory remarks on the weather and the scenery very politely, Mr. Russell found an opportunity of whispering to Hannah, “A young artist,—a surprising genius with whom I fell in yesterday by chance. I know little of him except that he is well acquainted with a cousin of mine, and has evidently had the education of a gentleman; but I think you will find him quite a *rara avis*.

Hannah looked towards the stranger with interest and curiosity. At the same time, Mr. Huntley turning to address himself to her, gave Mr. Russell an opportunity of which he presently availed himself, of repeating nearly the same *aside* to Mrs. Wellford.

“What an enchanting spot” began Huntley, “you have chosen for your delightful retirement! Here you seem to have every thing around you which the poets tell us is necessary or accessory to perfect happiness. ‘Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books.’ And I may add music, may not I? You have an instrument, I perceive.”

“I neither sing nor play,” replied Hannah, “but my sister does both.”

“She has a charming resource then. I can hardly ima-

gine how ladies fill up their time without music. But perhaps you pursue the sister art? You are fond of painting?"

"Very fond of looking at drawings," said Hannah, "but unfortunately I have no genius, and never made a tolerable drawing in my life. My sister draws, however——"

"How much she is to be envied for having two such delightful talents! Music and painting are twin sisters and ought never to be separated. But is it possible you admire both these fascinating arts, yet have made no efforts in either? I fancy the denial is owing to your modesty—or perhaps poetry is your engrossing study?"

Rosina's wondering eyes turned from the smiling proposer of these sifting questions, whom she could hardly tell whether to believe an actual quizzier or not, to her sister, who replied with perfect simplicity,—

"Yes, I am very fond of poetry, though I hope I do not allow it to become my engrossing pursuit."

"Pursuit? oh then, you write!——"

"Oh, dear, no!"

"Nor your sister?" inquired he, looking archly towards Rosina, who with a little colour and a little laugh, replied in the negative.

"After all," said Mr. Huntley, "we must allow fine taste to be the most attractive attribute in a woman. Genius implies a more masculine grasp of mind, and is hardly suitable to the delicacy of the sex. They sink under it, like Erminia beneath the sparkling armour of Clorinda. Now and then we find a lady strong enough to poise the heavy lance of the amazon, but such a phenomenon is uncommon and perhaps not very pleasing—and yours is the sex, you know, 'ne pour plaisir.'"

"No," said Rosina, "we are of

"the sex whom man was born to please."

"But does one quotation contradict the other, Rosina?" interposed Mr. Russell. "For my own part, I believe that the most important business both of men and women is to please."

"Indeed!" cried Rosina with surprise, "I should never have suspected *you* of thinking so."

"Yes, Rosina, the grand, the important business is to please. The only question on which people split is, whom are they to please? Some say, themselves, you know;

others, the world; others are old fashioned enough to say—
their Maker."

"I might have guessed a moral was coming," said Rosina smiling, "though I acknowledge that it is a very good one. But surely, Mr. Huntley, you are rather severe towards us poor ladies, in denying that we can possess the smallest particle of genius without becoming disagreeable."

"No, no," he replied, "I did not deny that. No, I love and admire every indication of talent in women; but the most attractive *degree* of it is perhaps what Marmontel happily call 'ce *demi-talent* qui sollicite l' indulgence, et qui'—stay, I hope memory will not play me false,—'qui' obtenant de l' estime et se passant de gloire, amuse les loisirs d' une modeste solitude."

"That is a very beautiful quotation, said Mrs. Wellford.

"Yes," said Mr. Russell, "and it completely embodies my ideas of what feminine accomplishments ought to be: it denotes the subjection in which they should be kept to higher pursuits, to render them harmless or even pleasing. However, I must do you, Rosina the justice to acknowledge, that without being disagreeable, you have more than a *demi-talent* for drawing."

"Indeed?" cried Huntley, assuming an air of such perplexity that Hannah and Rosina could not refrain from smiling.—"Where am *I* then, what will become of me, after all the treason I have been uttering?"

"You must recant," said Mr. Russell.

"Aye, so that you will but dictate the form," returned Huntley, "but who will ensure the acceptance of my recantation? I have involved myself in an awkward scrape. There is one hope left.—Perhaps you deceive yourself, Mr. Russell, or willfully deceive me in saying that this young lady really has more than a *demi-talent* for drawing. Pray, help me out of my difficulty," added he, turning to Rosina, "by shewing me your port-folio, that I may satisfy myself you draw very badly."

Rosina laughed, but shook her head. Huntley was not discouraged, and after some general discussion of the news of the day, renewed the attack.

"Are you quite resolved not to make me easy?"

"Yes, indeed."

"I see you are very implacable. I dare say you will never forget what I said about *demi-talent*."

"No, I dare say not."

"Are there no hopes for me, even of distant forgiveness?"
"Oh, forgive and forget are different things."

"Yes, but like hare and currant-jelly, they usually go together. I am afraid I am a lost man. My case is quite hopeless. If you felt the least relenting, you would not refuse me a little specimen, if it were but a mere sketch.—So trivial a favour—"

"And yet is it worth so much asking?"

"A slight one for you to grant, but a great one for me to receive. I wish your sister would intercede for me—"

"Oh, it would make no difference."

"What! are you so little accustomed to grant her requests? Are you on such bad terms with each other? How people may be misled by countenances! To think that the minds of two such apparently amiable young ladies should be occupied by the evil passions of hatred, envy, and malignity, or at best by freezing indifference!"

Rosina laughed again, and thought Mr. Huntley very odd. He afterwards turned to reply to an observation of Mrs. Wellford, and remained for some time unusually silent, apparently listening to her dialogue with Mr. Russell, but actually occupied in admiring the delicate tints of Hannah's complexion, and considering with what colours it could be imitated. It seemed to him the very complexion which Sir Joshua Reynolds had attempted to describe when he desired his pupils to "think of a pearl and a peach," It was neither red nor white, but composed of a gradation of hues more beautiful than either. Wishing at length to induce her to speak, he re-commenced the subject of his dialogue with Rosina.

"May I ask, in what style your sister draws?"

"In all styles, I think," said Hannah.

"Indeed!"

"That is—I hardly know what you mean by a style—whether the word applies to the subject or the manner of treating it. She draws any thing that strikes her in reading, or that she sees in her walks."

"That is no common talent."

"How can you have the perversity, Rosina," cried Mr. Russell, "to let Mr. Huntley fish by the hour together with the industry of an Isaac Walton, without having to boast of so much as a nibble? Drawings are meant to be shown, as bread is meant to be eaten. Come, let me add my entreaties to his, that you will favour us with a sight of your portfolio.

—I am very much mistaken if Mr. Huntley will not take the liberty which I sometimes take, of telling you of a few of your faults—if you give him encouragement."

"Which *you* never require," said Rosina, laughing. "Well—my poor little portfolio shall be untied, though it tains nothing worth seeing."

And with a mixture of dread and self-complacence, she spread her little collection before the artist. Huntley was surprised to see, instead of the formal, mounted copies which are usually found in young ladies' drawing-books, a variety of original designs, some on scraps of card or drawing-paper, some on letter backs, varying in their degrees of merit, full of faults, but displaying considerable power of imagination and freedom of execution.

"Here is no half-talent," said he, as he turned over the contents of the portfolio, "here is real genius, even though it be uncultivated. May I criticise freely?"

"Certainly," said Rosina.

"My daughter will be grateful to you, Mr. Huntley," said Mrs. Wellford.

"Well then," he resumed, "to begin with this little group, which seems, from the quotation beneath it, to represent the arrest of Mary, Queen of Scots."

And he pointed out its merits and defects, shewing what she must avoid and *how* she must avoid; with many striking illustrations of the precepts he was instilling. The whole of his little lecture contained such evidence of talent and good sense that Mr. Russell and Mrs. Wellford clearly saw that he was master of his subject. To elucidate some position he was laying down, Mr. Huntley produced what he called his pocket album, a little volume scarcely exceeding a memorandum-book in size, and neatly fastened with a button and string. Here were many first-thoughts hastily jotted down, odd physiognomies caught in the streets and in stage-coaches, picturesque fragments of various kinds, and several musical airs written out on fairy-like lines. Rosina's eye was caught by these miniature songs, and as the book was freely handed from one to another, she asked permission to examine Mr. Huntley's little selection of music. He immediately offered to lend it to her.

"Most of these songs are Italian, I see," said Rosina; "that is a language of which unfortunately I know nothing."

"You will like that little air of *Paesiello's*, however," said

Huntley, "even if you content yourself with merely playing it."

"Let us hear the air, Rosina," said Mr. Russell.

She was sure she should find it too difficult; but Huntley had moved a chair towards the piano-forte, and raised the music-desk. The first trial was not quite successful. Mr. Huntley hummed the song to set her right. The second time it was better played, and every one admired it. Mr. Huntley pleaded, however, for a little more expression, and Mrs. Wellford asking whether he could not sing, he laughed and said, "Oh, no!" Notwithstanding which, he immediately accompanied Rosina with a balmy, penetrating voice, such as she had never heard before. Hannah looked expressively at her mother, and Mr. Russell began, for the first time, to believe in stories of universal geniuses.

"It is sweet, but monotonous," said Huntley abruptly turning from the piano.

"Very sweet," said Mrs. Wellford.

"And yet, as you observe, Mr. Huntley," continued Mr. Russell, "the air is monotonous. Now, an idea strikes me,—I dare say I am wrong, for I know nothing of music—not so much as the difference between A sharp and B flat."

"I should wonder if you did," thought Rosina.

"But," he continued, "it seems to me that monotonous music, when sung by a fine rich voice, has a deeper effect on the mind than music which has more variety."

"Undoubtedly it has," said Huntley, "on a mind which is either wholly without cultivation, or which has arrived at the highest pitch of refinement. The untutored ear can relish none but simple melodies: when the ear begins to be cultivated, it also becomes vitiated, and takes pleasure in variety and apparent difficulty. It must even be kept from satiety by discords. As we go on the taste refines itself and we reach our original love of simplicity—we find we have travelled in a circle, and that when we fancied ourselves farthest from ignorance, we were at exactly the same distance from perfection. It is the same with every thing—dress, eating, books, manners, habits of life. The coquette comes back to her white gown, the epicure to his boiled chicken, the man of fortune to his cottage. We take great trouble to acquire fastidious tastes and then have to unlearn them."

While Rosina was considering how much of this was true, and how much new, she found that her mother's guests were taking leave. Much pathos was there in her farewell curtsey

to Mr. Huntley, and very sorry was she to receive his parting bow. As soon as he was fairly gone, her raptures clothed themselves in words.

"My dear mamma! My dear Hannah! Did you ever know such a charming person? Did you ever meet with such a universal genius? Such an enchanting voice, and such wit, and such eyes!"

"Softly, softly, Rosina, unless you would have us think, that, like King Lear, 'your wits begin to unsettle.'"

"But seriously, mamma, did you ever know any body at all to compare with this Mr. Huntley?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Ah, you are thinking of poor papa. But you, Hannah, you who are impartial, do not you think of him as I do?"

"He seems very clever indeed," said Hannah, "though I cannot go so far with you as to admire his eyes. He looks one out of countenance."

"Oh, my dear, that was the only the natural consequence of his admiring you so much. I like him the better for it—"

"What! for looking people out of countenance?"

"No, mamma, for admiring Hannah. You know he paints portraits, and portrait painters are obliged to study people's faces so constantly, that it must necessarily become a habit. I did not observe that he looked any one out of countenance. Well!—I must say I am surprised at you both. I thought you seemed so delighted with him."

"My dear Rosina, because we steady old ones cannot quite keep pace with your raptures, there is no reason why you should set us down as insensible to the merits of your hero. His conversation was amusing, his singing delightful, and his manners quite superior for a drawing-master."

"A drawing-master! my dear mother, what are you saying? Mr. Huntley is no drawing-master; Mr. Russell says he is a first-rate artist, a Royal Academician or Associate, I forget which—I dare say he would be quite affronted at one's offering to engage him as a teacher."

"Though he offered to teach you gratis. Ah, Rosina! the case is plain. You are kindred souls, and have mutually fallen over head and ears into love, at first sight."

"Oh, I am not to be laughed out of my opinion in that way; nor need you, Miss Hannah, look so provokingly arch. I shall be grateful to Mr. Russell as long as I live, for having introduced such a charming acquaintance to us. Ah! here is his dear little book, I declare! I did not think it had been

left behind. I shall carry it up-stairs with me, out of Betty's reach, and I wish you two insensible ladies a very good night, which I have no doubt you will enjoy. No drowsy indifference for me!"

The following day, Rosina was trying over Mr. Huntley's songs, admiring his sketches, and correcting her drawings according to the advice he had given her, till dinner-time. More than once she went to the window, and looked up the lane to see if *any body* were walking down it; but was disappointed, for Mr. Russell had carried Huntley to a beautiful view six miles off. In the afternoon, Rosina declared she must walk to Hexley to buy some new bonnet-ribbons, for her old trimmings were quite shabby, and she tried to persuade Hannah that her's were the same. Hannah was not to be convinced against the evidence of her own eyes, though, as her sister was bent on making the purchase, she consented to accompany her, notwithstanding the heat of the weather. Along two miles of the dusty, shadeless high road, therefore, they proceeded; the patient Hannah making no complaints; and on their arrival at the little shop, they had the gratification of finding the services of all the shopmen bespoken by their Saturday customers. Hannah was glad to rest herself on the summit of one of the high stools which had often excited her sister's ridicule; while Rosina, less tired, or not choosing to own it, had the pleasure of receiving a smirking bow from Edwin Good, as he passed with a file of schoolboys, trying to look as if he were independent of them. The blue ribbon was at length bought, and also a pretty pair of French gloves, which Hannah in her own mind set down to *the Huntley account*; but she made no remark, and they toiled home, looking, as their mother told them with a smile, "very unbecomingly hot." To Rosina's prodigious vexation, she learnt that Mr. Huntley had called in their absence, not even Mrs. Wellford having been at home. The walk had given Hannah a head-ache, and she sat languidly turning over the leaves of a book at the open window, while Rosina, her whole soul intent on the new trimming of her bonnet, was snipping, pinning, and placing, and lamenting that she had not bought another half yard.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SUDDEN CONVERT.

SUNDAY morning arose clear and bright, and Rosina, nicely dressed, accompanied her mother and sister to church with feelings of great complacence. She could not help stealing a furtive glance around, to see in whose pew Mr. Huntley might be sitting; but no Mr. Huntley was to be seen, a circumstance not inimical to her devotion. After service, Matthew ran to divide his mother and eldest sister, and accompany them down the lane; and Sam Good, in the glory of a new blue coat with bright metal buttons and a primrose waist coat, walked by the side of Rosina, flourishing his cane, drawing up his pert little figure, and observing that the weather was "uncommonly charming." He came on Matthew's invitation to lunch at the White Cottage; and then, to Rosina's relief, they set forth on a walk.

There was a poor lame boy, named Henry Neale, who lived in a small cottage on the chalk hills which bounded the valley opposite to the church, to whom, as he was unable to attend the service, Hannah always went to read for half an hour before dinner on Sundays. Thither she was now accompanied by Rosina, and as they were proceeding down the lane, Mr. Huntley crossed a stile which brought him immediately in their path. He looked pleased at the rencontre, bowed, hoped Mrs. Wellford was quite well, and took the same direction as that which they were keeping.

"I have had a delightful morning," said he, "on these downs!"

"You were not at church then?" said Hannah.

"No. That was very wicked of me, was it not?" said Mr. Huntley laughing, and looking at her as if he did not expect to be judged very severely. "I have been lying under a venerable tree, Miss Wellford,—listening to the harmony of the birds and the distant tolling of the village bell, and watching the various picturesque groups of peasantry as they crossed the hills. How much more enjoyable is a Sunday in the country than in London! There you are jostled by strings of elaborately dressed, unintellectual looking people, pouring from churches and chapels, or nearly run over by cockneys

in their one-horse chaises, setting out on expeditions to Highgate or Hampstead."

" You speak of meeting the congregations face to face, Mr. Huntley," said Hannah. " Are we to understand, then, that you do not add one to their number ? "

" That is a very satirical inference," he replied, smiling. " Oh, I assure you, I go to church—sometimes. However, I will acknowledge that my attendance might be more regular. But shall I also own to you that the green hills and the clear blue vault of heaven form, in my humble opinion, a fitter temple for the worship of their Maker than the most gorgeous building which man can raise ? "

Hannah looked at him in quiet surprise.

" I am an idle fellow, and talk a great deal of nonsense, I dare say ; but there is to me so much of formality, of mind-crushing repetition, in the prescribed service, so much of the tiresome or ridiculous in the manner in which it is usually performed, as to deaden, or at any rate, interrupt feelings of devotion. A liturgy is a good thing ; an established liturgy there ought to be ; I agree with you there—those that have no ideas of their own to express, must have words put into their mouths—but the helps which are given to sluggish piety are inefficient, and real piety wants none. A miserable chorus of charity children, often a droning preacher, always a bad clerk, are the chosen substitutes for the majestic trains of priests and melodious choirs who presided over the worship of the ancients. Surely," continued he more earnestly, and stooping as he spoke, to gather a tuft of flowers, " more real advantage may be derived from moralizing over one of these campanulas which spring beneath our feet, than in drowsily listening to one of those well-paid gentlemen who

—‘reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene’”

" You should hear Mr. Russell!" said Hannah with energy.

" Yes, he is a man of talent, and doubtless preaches well ; but will you not allow that, in general, my idea is correct ? "

" I—I dare say that the study of the campanula may awaken some very good feelings, but—"

" But what ? "

" Should we *rest* there ? That does not amount does it, to more than the religion of nature ? "

" Well ! "

Hannah paused, and Huntley for a moment looked triumphant.

"Well!" repeated he, "what have you to say against the religion of Nature?"

"Nothing] *against* it—only that there are six days in the week on which we may study campanulas; the seventh requires—something more."

"You are right," said Mr. Huntley, looking pleased; and after a short pause, he added, "I like to hear women plead for religion as if it were something intimately connected with themselves."

They had now reached Henry Neale's cottage; and Rosina, who had attentively listened to the dialogue between her sister and their new acquaintance, opened the garden gate.

"You are bound on some errand of charity, I suppose," said Mr. Huntley, as he glanced at the mean exterior of the cottage.—"Well, Miss Wellford, I am a thorough convert. You may believe me, I assure you. See! here goes the campanula! And this afternoon, I shall make a point of hearing your Mr. Russell."

"Every body's Mr. Russell," said Hannah.

"Nay, the pronoun was plural, and embraced the whole parish. Till I have the honour, Miss Wellford, of a more intimate acquaintance, the monosyllable *you* must occasionally comprise all Summerfield, while *we* stands for the busy world of London, with myself as one of its inhabitants."

Mr. Huntley bowed respectfully and gracefully, and passed on. "What a study she would make!" thought he. "If I could but persuade her to give me a few sittings!—"

CHAPTER IX.

A VILLAGE SOIRÉE.

"GIRLS," said Lady Worrall, entering Mrs. Wellford's parlour the following morning, "I'm come to tell you,—oh, my poor breath! When shall I get it again? This nasty hill of yours—I wish to goodness you'd stayed at the vicarage!"

"What was your Ladyship going to tell us?" inquired

Rosina, as soon as their visitor appeared in a speaking condition.

"That you and your mother must come and drink tea with me to-night, for the Goods have promised me, and moreover they are going to bring Matthew; and there'll be Margaret and Phoebe Holland. Bessy can't be spared, on account of her father's rheumatism. But I've a stranger coming, whose name I shan't tell you beforehand."

"Oh! how can your ladyship be so cruel? Won't you even say whether it is a gentleman or a lady?"

"No, no, no, not a word. Perhaps it's the Mrs. Barker you've heard me talk so often about, and perhaps it's my nephew, the captain—perhaps it's neither. Heyday, Rosina, what are you doing with that bonnet? Untrimming it again? I took notice of your new ribbons yesterday, I assure you. You have cut the strings too short in allowing too much for the bow, but that can't be helped now—you will only make matters worse. Satin ribbon always frays; and why could not you have bought white, to be like your sister?"

"Oh, I don't see why sisters should always dress alike, especially when they have different complexions. White suits Hannah very well, but really my brown skin requires something brighter to set it off. It stands to reason that what is becoming to a fair person must be unbecoming to one who is dark."

"Upon my word! And how long have *you* paid such attention to the becoming and unbecoming? I thought your mother had taught you to consider only what was neat!"

Rosina coloured. "This comes," pursued her ladyship in high dudgeon, "of letting such young girls have allowances! When I was a child of your age, I had a guinea to keep in my pocket, and never was allowed to buy myself so much as a box of patches. And as to a calash, or a polonaise—!"

"Pray, Lady Worral, what kind of things may those be? I never heard of them before."

"Pshaw! pretend never to have heard of a polonaise or a sacque? Come to me, some morning, and I'll shew you what they are. I'll shew you the primrose pattysway that I was married in, when I only measured twenty-one inches round the waist: one of your good old pattysways that would last a woman's lifetime, not like the flimsy things they make up now; and I might wear it to this day, if I could but get into it. Why is your mother always out when I come?"

"She could not guess that your ladyship meant to call upon

her this morning. She has only gone to speak to Dame Stokes."

"Ah, she may perhaps stay gossiping with her for an hour. Molly Stokes has no objection to let her irons get red-hot before the fire while she is telling all the news of the village. It was always her character. I remember her as a housemaid to Mrs. Greenway, about fifteen years ago, a strapping rosy-faced girl as you'd wish to see, and she was always gossiping at the shop or running over to the White Hart. She had a flirtation with Simon, the baker's man, and every body thought a match would come of it, but I knew better. So at last, you see, she was obliged to take up with Timothy Stokes. That's almost always the way with beauties; they think they may have whom they like; and plume themselves upon it, till they are obliged to sit down with worse luck than their neighbours. Mind that, young ladies. But it's of no use for old folks to talk, for young folks won't mind them. There was Mr. Russell read us a fine chapter yesterday about young women not clothing themselves in pearls and costly array, but I dare say Sam Good put it all out of your head, Rosina, before you had walked half down the lane."

"I am sure Sam Good had not the power of making me think of any thing but his own extreme disagreeability," said Rosina scornfully.

Lady Worrall took a pinch of snuff, and then said, "Well, I may depend on seeing you early, for of course you've no other engagement; and, Rosina, be sure you make yourself very smart for your new beau."

"Oh, it is a gentleman, is it?"

"There, I've let the cat out of the bag. But it's no one you have ever seen."

"Surely, Lady Worrall, you may as well tell us all now. It can't be Captain Worrall, for I know he's at Naples."

"No, he isn't, he's at Sorrento. No, this is the grandson of an old flame of mine, whom I danced with, many's the time, when I was a girl. I fell in with this young man an hour ago, when he was taking a sketch in my park."

"Mr. Huntley!" said both of the girls.

"Yes, it is, but how do you know any thing of him?"

"Oh, Mr. Russell introduced him to us on Friday, and we were all quite delighted with him. So then you know all about him?"

"All about him? I did not know the lad was in existence; for the last time I saw Captain Huntley was at an officers'

ball in the year—let me see—no matter,—we were both of us single then. That was the grandfather, you understand—a very fine man; he wore the willow for me two or three years, and then married a Miss Hutchinson. His only son grew up to be a fine young man too, and he bought a commission for him; but then, you see, this son thought proper to marry without his father's consent; and afterwards he was killed in America. So now you know all that I can tell you. *This* young man is as like his grandfather as possible, allowing for the disadvantage of his not wearing powder; and it seems that he has been brought up to painting. Bless me! if old Captain Huntley could look out of his grave, and see one of his descendants taking money for pictures! However, he's disowned by all his father's relations; notwithstanding which, I don't see any harm in having invited him to tea."

"Well!" cried Rosina, when Lady Worrall was gone, "it seems he is a gentleman by descent at any rate!"

In the evening, or rather afternoon, when Mrs. Wellford and her daughters entered Lady Worrall's drawing-room, they found Mr. Huntley already arrived and smilingly listening to an account of a public breakfast at which his grandfather had figured fifty years ago. He gave up his chair to Mrs. Wellford, and manœuvred to get a seat next to Hannah, in which, however, he was disappointed; and before he had had time to suffer much from his loss, the three Miss Hollands arrived and a voluble explanation took place, how that Bessy *was* able to come after all, because Aunt Patty had unexpectedly come from town, and papa had always fancied Aunt Patty's nursing more than that of any one else. They were soon followed by Mr. and Mrs. Good and by Matthew Wellford. Matthew was a good-humoured and good-looking young man of about twenty, fair-haired, and uniting something of Hannah's countenance to Rosina's thoughtless spirits. Miss Phœbe Holland often condescended to bestow a few smiles on him, to which Matthew gratefully replied by some first-attempts at easy compliment; though he often complained to his sisters with much pathos, that "there was not a woman in Summerfield worth speaking to." Matthew, with considerable good taste and keenness of apprehension, was not free from *mauvaise honte*; and when he had nothing to say, he made up for it by a laugh. His communications to Rosina, which, let them have been separated for ever so short a time, were always very fluent, he whisperingly conveyed to her this evening in the following manner.

" We got a new patient to-day. A famous rich old fellow—Mr. Kippis, who lives at the Grove, you know, about eight miles off. He always used to have Parker of Hexley, but Parker was out of the way, so the servant came on to us, and it's my opinion that now we've got our foot in there, we shall keep our ground. Parker is a lowbred, disagreeable fellow, disliked by all the ladies, and nothing would have got him into such practice but a false opinion of his skill. He's nothing! nothing at all, as people will find out at last. Well, and so as Mr. Good was obliged to go off to the Grove, you know, I was obliged to step over to the Miss Hinckleys at Hundleford, and very pretty girls they are, I assure you. There was one playing the harp. The old lady seemed at first rather dissatisfied at *the master's* not going over himself, but I explained how that was, so then all was right, and we got on famously. I went on the mare. Oh, by the by, what do you think? Sam Good smuggled me over "The Last of the Mohicans!" So I have dipped into it once or twice behind the surgery counter, and to-night I mean to coax cook out of a long piece of candle, and have a good spell of it. Don't you envy me? You shall have it when I've done with it, if you like."

" Thank you, but I don't think mamma would like my borrowing novels of Sam Good."

" Oh, but I needn't tell Sam—He's in no hurry for it. But do as you like."

" Does it seem very interesting?"

" Oh! beyond every thing. The hero is a black. I mean a red. A red Indian! What do you think of that?"

" How frightful!"

" Not at all. He is very handsome. So" (lowering his voice) "that is the Mr. Huntley you were telling me of. He seems a lively little fellow. How he is running on to Hannah! He makes himself quite at home. These are London manners, I suppose; I wish I could rattle away in that manner; but I don't know how it is, I never can find any thing to say. Don't laugh, now; I mean except to you and Hannah. To-day, for instance, all the way to Hundleford, I was thinking how I should make myself agreeable, and settling just the easy kind of way I should go in, and the easy kind of things I should say, all quite pat; but when the time came, I could not bring one of them in. Was not that tiresome?"

Mr. Russell at this moment made his entrée, and appeared surprised, though pleased to find Huntley in the circle. Matthew seemed disposed to renew his confidences to Rosina.

"The worst of it is, Rosina, I shall never have an opportunity of improving my manners in this wretched neighbourhood; and manners are of such immense consequence in a medical man! There's Parker, now, might carry off all our business, if he had but good manners. Look at that Mr. Huntley! He's laughing and joking with Mrs. Good and Lady Worrall, and yet, you know, he is not acquainted with any of their connections, so that one would think he could have nothing but the weather to talk to them about. I think I shall go and profit by his agreeable nothings."

Matthew quitted his seat, but before he attained the object of his journey, he was arrested by Miss Phœbe Holland.

"Ah! Mr. Matthew, I saw you ride by to-day on your mare! Where were you going?"

"To see some very pretty young ladies, I can tell you, Miss Phœbe."

"Some very pretty young ladies? Well, who could they be? I don't think there are many pretty young ladies in this neighbourhood."

"Oh, pardon me, Miss Phœbe, I think I could name two or three."

"Dear me, could you?" said she, laughing, and evidently thinking that she must be included in the number. "Well now, really, with the exception of your sisters, I should be puzzled to find any. Fanny Good, to be sure, *will* be a beauty some of these days, but she's so very young yet. I should hardly think you alluded to any young ladies that weren't in their teens."

"Oh, but indeed I did—to one."

"Ha, ha, ha!—Well, at any rate your pretty young ladies this morning were not in the immediate neighbourhood, or else you would not have gone on horseback."

"That's a clever guess of yours. Now try then, if you can guess their name."

"Let me see. The Fields?"

"You don't call them beauties, I hope?"

"He, he! Oh, there's no accounting, you know, for tastes—I dare say they have their admirers. Well then—the Joliffes?"

"Out again."

"The Miss Petersons?"

"No."

"Tell me in which direction you rode—east, west, north, or south?"

"Oh, that would be telling you at once."

"Not the Petersons?"

"No."

"Nor the Joliffes?"

"No."

"Nor the Fields?"

"No."

"Well, I give it up."

"The Miss Hinckleys."

"Was it indeed!"

Matthew had now exhausted his "agreeable nothings," so he walked off.

After tea, Lady Worrall made up her card-table, and the young people gathered before the open window, which looked out on a terrace.

"Why should not we take a turn in the grounds?" said Matthew, "it would be pleasanter, this hot evening, than staying in doors."

"Yes, it would be delightful," said Rosina, running down the steps.

"Be prudent, young ladies," cried Mr. Good from his card-table—"there is an insidious air stirring this evening. It is very disinterested of me to give you warning."

"Yes, but very sly of you, Mr. Good," returned Mr. Russell, "to bring out a young pupil whose temptations to imprudence are likely to meet with more attention than your warnings. Come, shall we be imprudent enough to follow the general example?" added he, offering his arm to Hannah.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Russell," cried Lady Worrall, "you had better follow the youngsters, to keep them in order. I'm sorry, young ladies, there's no chaperon for you—however, Bessy Holland is only a year younger than Mrs. Wellford, so she'll do quite as well."

Miss Holland laughed as gaily as she could, and took Matthew's offered arm. "Which way shall we go?" said she.

"What is that curious old building I see among the trees?" said Huntley. "Is it a ruin?"

"That is the belfry," said Rosina; "Sir John Worrall rung many a peal in it; and after his death the country people used sometimes to fancy on stormy nights, that they heard his ghost still trying the chimes."

"Indeed! I should like to have a nearer view of it."

Huntley placed himself between Rosina and the youngest Miss Holland; and Hannah and Mr. Russell soon found themselves left behind.

"I was not a little astonished," said Mr. Russell, "to find Mr. Huntley domesticated here this evening. Has he some spell which opens the doors of people's houses? How did Lady Worrall become acquainted with him?"

"She met him sketching in her park this morning," said Hannah, "and as ceremony seldom prevents her from accosting any one who comes in her way, they entered into conversation, in the course of which she discovered him to be the grandson of an old acquaintance.

"An old acquaintance! So far, so good," said Mr. Russell, "I don't think Mr. Huntley would impose on the old lady—"

"Impose! surely not," said Hannah. "Besides, she says he so closely resembles his grandfather that she should have known him any where for a Huntley."

"That is another lucky circumstance," observed he, "for Lady Worrall has a quick eye and a good memory. Well, I am glad to have some one's authority besides his own, for the respectability of his connections. His manners indeed, speak for themselves. Yet prepossessed as I was by them, I could not help having a few misgivings, when it was too late, as to the propriety of having introduced him to you while so slightly acquainted with his character. There is an apparent candour, indeed, about him, which makes it difficult to believe him other than what he seems; but so many virtues are requisite in the man whom we admit into female society—"

"I think you are unnecessarily apprehensive," replied Hannah; "Lady Worrall confirms his assertion of respectable birth, and your cousin Frank's intimacy with him relieves him from the suspicion of being a bad moral character. His varied talents render him a very amusing companion, and that is all we shall ever think of him."

"How can you be sure of that?" said Mr. Russell. "From what Huntley said this evening to Lady Worrall, it seems he means to stay in Summerfield as long as he finds any thing here to *amuse* or *interest* him. May not there be more in that than meets the ear? You see he is no longer merely my acquaintance, but will be able to visit here and at your mother's on his own ground. The degree of intimacy which will follow will be entirely voluntary; and the more

fascinating his talents, the more firm will become his footing, till at length it may be rather difficult to——”

“I know whom you are thinking of *now*, Mr. Russell,” said Hannah with an ingenuous expression of countenance, “but you need not alarm yourself. There is no fear of Rosina.”

“None, I believe! none!” returned Mr. Russell smiling with a relieved air. “Here is the belfry,” he presently observed, “but where are our village belles? In what direction, I wonder, have Matthew and Mr. Huntley run away with them, or have they run away with Matthew and Mr. Huntley? I am not so quick-witted as an Indian in following a trail.”

“I think I hear Miss Phoebe Holland’s voice to the left,” said Hannah. “Most likely they have walked up the hill. See, here is a rose which has dropped, or been thrown away.”

“You would follow a trail better than I should. Well, and has Rosina been very industrious with her pencil ever since the lecture Mr. Huntley read her on Friday night?”

“Yes, she has endeavoured to improve on his hints.”

“And you also?”

“Oh, no, I have almost given up drawing. My pursuit of success in that amusement always meets with disappointment.”

“With disappointment, does it? Ahem! Do you know the genealogy of Disappointment? I will tell you her history. She was the daughter of a certain couple called Ignorance and Expectation; but when Ignorance died, his widow married an honest gentleman named Moderation, who carried her off to his country-seat; and from that day, Expectation never saw Disappointment again.”

“So, if we are moderate in our expectations, we shall never be disappointed; that is the moral of your allegory, is it not?”

“Stay, I must tell you what became of Disappointment when she was thus unfeelingly deserted by her mother. Miss Disappointment, being left to her own devices, began, like other young ladies, to look out for a husband. Now it so happened that in the very garret adjoining her own lodged a young poet, whose name—whose name was Alexander—and whose days and nights were devoted to the composition of an epic poem. Well, Hannah, Disappointment, artfully veiled, continually placed herself in his path—poets,

you know, love adventure and mystery—Alcander's curiosity was excited, and he began to inquire who this veiled fair one could be. Ask whom he would, he could obtain no information, his friends shook their heads and knew nothing about her: at last teased by his importunity, one of them, a wag, and rather an ill-natured one we must allow, told him her name was Success."

"Oh, poor Alcander! I see what is to happen now. Under this mistake, you will make him marry disappointment. Well, pray go on."

"You are angry with Alcander's friend? but what can one do when some pert young author is continually troubling one with his manuscript effusions, but advise him to favour the world by their publication? Yes, Alcander, as you guess, married Disappointment, his poem was rejected by the book-sellers, and poverty stared him in the face. However, his wife proved herself a useful, though unfavoured helpmate; for she pointed out to him the faults of his MS., assisted him in correcting them, and gave him much valuable advice; so that, in time, he began to look on her harsh features with composure, if not with affection. At length he became one of the first writers of the age. Disappointment died; and after a moderately short courtship, he married Success, whose smiles conferred on him all the happiness a young poet could desire. There, Hannah, have not I wound up my story in the true novel-like manner?"

"I wish Rosina had been here!" said Hannah. "Could not you write out that pretty allegory for her, Mr. Russell?"

"Write it out? Ah, Hannah, my days for writing poetry are over, and it would cut a shabby figure in plain prose. No no, if you mean her to benefit by the moral, she must have your own version of the story."

They now came in sight of the rest of the party, who were standing on the brow of the hill. "How composedly you two steady folks have climbed up to us!" cried Rosina. "I dare say you prefer a moral dissertation to the finest sunset in the world."

"I repel such an accusation with scorn," said Mr. Russell. "Yes; such a sunset as this, is indeed worth seeing!"

"Worth seeing! what an unpoetical phrase! Mr. Huntley has been talking almost in blank verse about those glorious gold and purple clouds. Oh, they are beautiful! most beautiful!"

"Beautiful!" repeated Mr. Russell, "I am very glad we do not live in a slate-colour world."

"A slate-colour world! What an exceedingly odd idea!" cried Miss Phœbe Holland. "Only fancy how droll it would be to see skies, trees, faces, water, and every thing slate-colour!"

"Ay, or yellow, as people do who have the jaundice," said Matthew.

"A fine Claude-Lorraine effect, no doubt," cried Huntley, laughing.

"And there are more unhappy victims still," remarked Mr. Russell, "who labour under a moral jaundice, and see every thing the sickly colour of their own tempers. They are the most to be pitied."

"Well, I'm sure we may be very thankful," said Miss Holland, "that none of *us* are affected by these horrible diseases bodily or mental."

"What amazing variety there is," said Mr. Russell after a pause, "in those western clouds! Cannot you look at them till you fancy you behold a fairy land of snow-white palaces and mountains, golden lakes and sapphire streams?"

"Often have *I* indulged in such dreams, I assure you," said Huntley, "and sighed to awake to the remembrance that we were not made to be the tenants of such heavenly scenery."

"Not till the 'cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces' of our present residence are whelmed in final ruin; but who knows? we may then find ourselves the denizens of a new land combining the substantial beauty of the planet we now inhabit with some of that fairy splendour which mocks our grasp in the fleeting vapours.—

"What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?"

"Well," said Miss Phœbe, after a pause which to some of the party was awkward, and to others full of thought, "I'm sure I always thought in the future world we were to walk upon clouds."

"Had we not better think of returning?" cried Miss Margaret, "it's dangerous standing about."

"I think so too," said Miss Phœbe—"La! there's a cloud just the shape of a gigot sleeve!—do let us have a run down the hill."

"She seized Rosina's arm as she spoke, and darted off, followed by Miss Margaret and Matthew. Mr. Russell offered an arm to Miss Holland, and Huntley placing himself on the other side of Hannah, easily managed to detach her from her older escort as the path narrowed.

"Much character peeps out," said he in a low voice, "even in passing remarks on a cloud. The golden mists which supply the painter with hints for canvases yet unstretched, and the preacher with glimpses of paradise, remind *some* ladies of a gigot sleeve! Oh, 'most odious' comparison!"

"Dear me!" cried Phœbe Holland at the same instant to Rosina, as she stood fanning herself with her handkerchief at the foot of the hill, "Mr. Russell is a very nice sort of a man and very good and so on, but he's always bringing in speeches about heaven and that sort of thing, isn't he? And really I think it's rather ill-bred, for it stops one from laughing and one don't always know how to answer him."

"I think you are rather severe on poor Mr. Russell," said Rosina, who never could bear agreeing with Phœbe Holland in any thing of higher concern than the colour of a ribband; "no one can accuse him of quoting Scripture out of season; and as to his similes and speculations, I think they are very pleasing and striking; and mamma thinks so too."

"Well, well, but let me just give you an instance of what I mean," resumed Miss Phœbe: "suppose Mr. Russell——"

"Who speaks of Mr. Russell?" cried he, a few paces in the rear, "take care, Miss Phœbe, that I overhear no secrets."

"La, Mr. Russell! how fast you and Bessy have come down the hill! Listeners, you know, never hear any good of themselves."

"Don't they, though?" cried Matthew.—"Remember, Miss Phœbe, what *I* overheard between two certain ladies, one night, at Mrs. Greenway's! Do *you* recollect?"

"Oh, Mr. Wellford, for goodness' sake, don't tell that silly story now, I beg! If you do, I'll never forgive you!" cried she in distress, partly real, partly affected.

"Well, I'll be upon honour," replied he, with a triumphant smile.

"I'm sure I hope," whispered Phœbe Holland, pulling Rosina back to let the others pass, "that Mr. Russell didn't overhear us. He made me start, did he not you? He has such a keen, sly way of looking at one sometimes, just as if he could see into one's thoughts; and one likes to be on good terms with the clergyman, especially where there's so little

change of society. Do you know I sometimes fancy he thinks seriously of Bessy, for he pays a great deal more attention to her than to either of us young ones. I wonder if any thing will ever come of it. But, my dear, do tell me who that agreeable Mr. Huntley is. It seems you have met him before."

Poor Rosina was always extremely annoyed when she fell into the clutches of Phœbe Holland, for whose weak understanding and frivolous conversation she had very little tolerance. Miss Phœbe had a sort of instinctive awe of Hannah's quiet, gentle dignity, but she chose to fancy there was a great similarity of tastes between herself and Rosina, who found some difficulty in checking her attempts at confidential intimacy. Most girls have been exposed to the advances of some such undesirable acquaintance, and they are happy who are able to draw a line which gently, but steadily, intimates to the fair intruder that so far she may come but no further. On the present occasion, Rosina, upon her return to Lady Worral's drawing-room, was unwillingly detained from the group formed by her brother and sister, Mr. Russell, Mr. Huntley, and the elder Miss Hollands, by a long detail of Phœbe's concerning the how-and-about of the approaching marriage of Sophia Jane Browne, one of her vulgar cousins, to a Mr. Higgs or Briggs. All very interesting to the parties concerned, no doubt; but what indifferent person could be expected to listen with satisfaction, or even patience, to the courtship between a Miss Browne and a Mr. Briggs? Rosina listened with divided attention as she caught snatches of the distant repartee and tantalizing laugh. At length Mr. Huntley approached her, followed by Matthew.

"Would it be treason," said he, "to break in on such confidential and intellectual intercourse as you two ladies are doubtless sharing, with a request for a little music?"

"I am afraid, Mr. Huntley, you are very satirical. You do not give us credit in your heart for conversing in a manner either confidential or intellectual."

"Upon my word I do. Why else have you 'sat apart' like Milton's angels, without deigning to listen to the innocent trifles at which Miss Wellford and Miss Holland have been laughing? In the midst of their mirth and of my folly, I could not help glancing occasionally towards this bow-window, where, I conjectured you were entertaining 'thoughts more elevate' and holding debate on—what shall I say?—not on fate and fore-knowledge, but on

Broken hearts and vows, sleeves, bonnets, caps,
Bills registered, and expectations sure.

Was I far from the truth?"

"I shall not tell you. Why should ladies be unable to talk of any thing better than bonnets and caps?"

"I do not question the ability,—only the will. They *may* talk of better things—they *cannot* talk of prettier things—unless they talk of themselves."

Miss Phœbe laughed. Mathew thought the last turn very neat.

"But with regard to bonnets continued Huntley, sitting down by Rosina, "there may a great difference of tastes between us. Now, I once had a conversation about bonnets with a Royal Academician—"

"With a Royal Academician!"

"Yes; why not? Is there anything so very odd in a Royal Academician's condescending to analyze the beauty or deformity of a bonnet? We agreed that the more colourless, battered, and mis-shapen it could be, the better."

"The better!"

"Yes—for pictorial purposes. I was painting a fancy portrait of a young lady sitting out of doors, and we had down all my mother's and sister's bonnets to see which would come in best. There was a black silk, and a white satin, and a Dunstable straw, and a pink crape. Not one of them was picturesque. We had up the maid servant's—her best and her worst.—Still too good. At that moment, a little beggar-girl happened to be hanging over the rails. We threw up the window, concluded the bargain in two minutes for ninepence, and took in the old hat on a stick. It was the essence of shape and colour! My dainty lady-sitter would, however, by no means put it on, so we fitted it on a block. It was the admiration of all Somerset House! —After this, madam, do not suppose it beneath a man's genius to think of a bonnet!"

Huntley paused, and then renewed his request for music.

"Have you any idea on what sort of an instrument you are inviting me to play?" said Rosina.

"No, its outward appearance is certainly rather antique, but is it so miserable a piano?"

"A harpsichord of the worst description. The first chord I should strike on its jingling keys would make you run out of the room."

"Oh, terrible! I certainly think people are not justified in inviting acquaintance to their houses unless they are provided with some means of entertaining them."

"Why, as to that?" interposed Matthew, "if people are but got together, no matter how, I think they may always entertain themselves."

"By laughing at each other."

"No—by talking, as we are doing now."

"Oh—entertaining themselves by entertaining each other. Why, as to talking as we are doing now, *that* is beyond the power of some. People are so foolish as generally to set about talking on those things of which they know least. A musician tries to discuss soups and *pâtés* very scientifically with an epicure, the epicure makes blunders about crotchetts and quavers. A lady talks to a gentleman of politics, and he returns the compliment by expatiating on bonnets."

"Well, and in this way you get a great deal of general conversation."

"Yes, they do well to stick to generals, for not one of them is competent to descend into particulars. To prevent their finding out each other's deficiencies, there ought to be the requisites for music and dancing, portfolios of prints, or costumes for proverbs and charades—"

"Charades, what are they?" inquired Miss Phoebe.

"Is it possible you have never seen an acted charade? Oh, it is the prettiest amusement in the world, and allows the freest scope imaginable for fine wit, fine dress, and fine attitudes. Could not we get one up now? These folding-doors would be very convenient, and I should think Lady Worrall's wardrobe would furnish a most amusing assortment of costumes."

"Yes, for old aunts and grandmothers," said Rosina, "but are the actors, speeches extempore? It must be very difficult—"

"Oh, by no means—even the Bourgeois Gentilhomme could speak prose without knowing it; and as for blank verse,—if you are at no loss for sentiments, the metre will come of itself."

"I doubt that," said Matthew, taking a deep breath.

"'Tis the easiest thing in the world," cried Huntley. "Why I could talk to you in blank verse for an hour together if you would listen to me, no matter the subject. Lend me your ears—

He talked in metre, for the metre came ;
 Not like the coach of Chrononhotonthologus
 Which came not when 'twas summoned, for the metre
 Came without calling. Therein was the difference ;
 And judgment's shewn in shewing differences,
 As wit in shewing likenesses.

Miss Phœbe, how do you like my speaking in blank verse ?”
 “ Oh, excellent, excellent !” cried she, laughing. “ Pray
 do it again.”

“ ‘Tis gone !” said Huntley waving his hand, “ the spirit
 has passed.”

“ But do tell us more about these charades, Mr. Huntley,”
 said Rosina. “ Cannot you describe one to us ?”

“ Not I fear, so as to give you any idea of their spirit.
 But I will just sketch you an outline. Imagine us all to be
 sitting here in darkness, as spectators, while those folding-
 doors shut out half a dozen actors from our view. Well ;
 the door opens ; we see an extemporaneous shop-counter,
 with a tradesman behind it setting out his wares, consisting
 of cutlery. In comes a very dandified customer. ‘ Ah !—
 hum—ha !—my fine feller—what did you mean by imperti-
 nently furnishing me with—a—hum—ha !—a perfectly use-
 less commodity ?—‘ A parfactly useless commodity, sar, I
 don’t understand what you mean.’—‘ Come, come, Mr. a—
 razor-stropper, if—a—you make any difficulty in taking back
 your bad goods and restoring me my money, I shall—a—
 take the disagreeable trouble of ejecting you and your manu-
 factures into the street.’—‘ Sar ! let me tell you, sar, I won’t
 put up with no such language, sar, from no man, neither
 will I return your money, nor permit you to haul me over
 my counter.’—‘ Why, what, what, what, what (stuttering
 with rage,) do you mean by this impertinence ?’—‘ Sar, ’tis
 you sar, that are impertinent.’—‘ Your razors are totally
 without edge, they are good for nothing’—‘ Sar, you mis-
 take, they answer the purpose they were made for parfactly
 well.’—‘ Why, you old Jew ! you won’t tell me that to my
 face, will you ? What are razors made for, if not to cut ?’—
 ‘ Sar, they are made to sell.’ On this a scuffle ensues and
 the scene closes. Can you guess the syllable ?”

“ Jew, razor.”

“ No no. Well, in the next scene, we have a lady sitting
 down to dine without her husband, for whom she has vainly
 waited, and at the same time a couple of poor cousins drop
 in, who are not above taking rather mean methods of procur-

ing an invitation to dinner. Mrs. Smith, the lady of the house, has a cutlet for herself, as she cannot touch her husband's favourite dish of mackarel, of which her cousins profess themselves immoderately fond. They apply themselves to the fish, but their appetites which a moment before had appeared very keen, are now visibly damped. Cousin Peter calls for a bone-plate, and watching his opportunity, places it on his knees beneath the table-cloth. He and his wife exchange wry faces. The conversation proceeds with a good deal of humour and equivoque, when the hostess is called from the table by a lamentable accident in the nursery—possibly one of her children has fallen into the fire or out of the window. No sooner has she hastily quitted the apartment than cousin Peter and his wife begin their lamentations—‘ My dear, did you ever taste such mackarel?’—Taste, my love. The smell has been enough for me—it is in what our worthy friend Pat Brady would call the highest state of *petrefaction*.—‘ Then how did you manage to ask for a second helping?’—Peter produces the plate from between his knees, they laugh, and the scene closes as he proceeds to throw its contents out of the window. Cannot you guess now?’

“ No.”

“ I think your brother has guessed. Well, now for the finale. Enter Mrs. Germaine to her dear friend Lady Mary, who is always willing to perform good-natured actions when they give her no manner of inconvenience. ‘ My dear Lady Mary, I am come to beg a little favour.’—‘ Oh, dearest Mrs. Germaine, pray name it; I am always so happy—’ ‘ Why, my dear creature, it is merely this. I have a family of country cousins come to spend a week with me, and as I wish to make their time pass pleasantly, I shall be excessively obliged to you if you will lend us your opera-box to-night.’ ‘ Why really, my dear Mrs. Germaine, I should be delighted to do so, but it happens that to-night it will be particularly inconvenient,—for—I have a new hat which I have set my heart on wearing,—and—I expect to see Colonel Jonquil, who will bring me information about the sweet little French poodle he promised to buy for me, so that really,—you see, my dear creature, how I am situated.’ ‘ Well, dear Lady Mary, I own I am disappointed, as you have so often said your box was at my service,—however, perhaps on Saturday.’ ‘ Saturday, oh, certainly—though, now I recollect, there is a new opera coming out on that night, and you

know I am so passionately fond of music! But I will keep a place for *you*!" "Thank you, but I cannot leave my cousins."—"Well then, any evening *after* this week."—"I am much obliged to your ladyship, but my guests leave me on Monday." "How very annoying! Well, I'm sure I am amazingly provoked at being unable to oblige you, but you see it is so completely out of my power." "Oh, pray make no excuse." "Any thing *else*?" "Yes, yes, I understand your ladyship." "Or any other *time*?" "Certainly, certainly, I feel your kindness. The disappointment is of no consequence."—(Aside, as she goes out. "I shall know, in future, how to value the good-nature of Lady Mary.")

"Oh, Mr. Huntley! I have guessed! It is *sel-fish*, is not it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"How excellent! how entertaining! Do let us ask Lady Worral's consent to a charade. Lady Worral, will you grant us a favour?"

"Let us hear it first," said her Ladyship, without looking up from her cards.

"Mr. Huntley has a charming amusement to propose. It is something like a play—"

"And where is he to find actors, scenery, and dresses?"

"Mr. Huntley! do you hear?"

"Oh, your ladyship's furniture and wardrobe will be amply sufficient for the two latter, and as for the actors, I doubt not some of the present company will lend their assistance, with your ladyship's permission."

"My ladyship will permit no such thing," replied Lady Worral bluntly. "A fine thing, indeed, for my dresses and furniture to be pulled about by a set of racketty young people, and for unmarried young ladies and clergymen to act stage-plays! No, no; the Miss Darevilles' acting in the Fair Penitent and She Stoops to Conquer thirty years ago, gave me a sickening of private theatricals. Miss Rosina will favour us with a song, I dare say."

"I am terribly hoarse," said Rosina.

"Then your voice would never do for the stage," observed Lady Worral. "Come, come, open the harpsichord; and if you won't play, perhaps Phœbe Holland will."

Miss Phœbe only required a little pressing from Matthew and Mr. Huntley to consent; and she favoured them with a ballad which though it had been ground for six months on the London hand-organs, had not yet lost its novelty in Summerfield. She maintained her seat at the instrument till

Huntley began to repent his original proposal for music. Rosina made some amends by singing 'Come unto these yellow sands,' in a young, rich voice that might have suited Ariel; and Mr. Good joined Huntley in supplying the chorus. In another half-hour the whole party were returning through the park.

At the park-gates, the Goods and Hollands wished their companions good night. Mr. Russell and Mr. Huntley, who had walked beside Mrs. Wellford and Hannah, proposed seeing them home; and Matthew, who led the way with Rosina, soon left the more leisurely pedestrians behind.

"What a pleasant evening this has been!" said Rosina.

"Famous!" said Matthew, "I only wish Sam Good had been with us."

"I am sure I wish no such thing," said Rosina.

"Sam is a good fellow," replied Matthew, "though, I allow, not equal to this Mr. Huntley. And yet we might have been as merry, if instead of him, we had had Sam."

"Oh, Matthew! how can you think so!"

"You are all for new faces, Rosina—I am more steady to old ones. What do we know of this fine rattling gentleman? There is a *something* about him, certainly, which I feel I want—a kind of ease, off-handedness, lightness, brilliancy, what French people call *je ne sais quoi*—and yet I can't recollect any thing he said which was particularly clever—nothing equal to that bon-mot of Sam's—"

"Oh, Matthew, do not give me any of Sam's bon-mots to-night."

"Very well—you are punishing yourself, for the bon-mot was a very good one. Here we are. How brightly the moon shines! What an immense time they are coming down the lane! Well, good night; you know I am impatient to return to 'The Last of the Mohicans.'"

CHAPTER X.

DRAWING LESSONS GRATIS.

MR. Huntley was indefatigable in the practice of his art. He rose with the lark, and, sketch-book in hand, roamed daily

in search of the picturesque, till scarcely a tree or tenement, cottage or cottager, but had found a place in his portfolio. The rural housewives were pleased with the clever young gentleman who praised the beauty of their children, asked leave to copy their old tables and chairs, and shewed them the views he had already taken of the church and the vicarage. They were proud that he should think it worth his while to copy anything of theirs into his book, and remarked to one another that whereas they had 'heard say, that painters got great sums of money from gentlefolks for drawing their pictures, *this* young painter was another guess sort of body, for he gave half-pence and sixpences to folks for letting their likenesses be taken. Huntley viewed with complacence the heads of John Giles, and Joe Barton, and Mary Smith, of which he had thus been enabled to make studies ; but there was a darling wish of his soul yet unsatisfied—every time he saw Hannah Wellford, he was more and more struck with her Madonna-like loveliness ; and his desire to paint her portrait was increased rather than diminished by the improbability of obtaining her consent. He often tried to sketch the outline of her placid features from memory, and as often gave up the attempt in despair.

Huntley frequently spent his evenings at the vicarage ; and the knowledge that Mr. Russell was '*l'ami intime*' at the White Cottage would have induced him to have requested his intercession, had not a certain indescribable feeling persuaded him that Mr. Russell would be the worst person in the world to entrust with such an office. "I shall remain here a little longer, however, for the chance," thought Huntley ; and his two or three days at the White Hart accordingly lengthened into two or three weeks.

One morning, soon after the party at Lady Worrall's, Huntley called at the White Cottage, ostensibly to ask Rosina for his little book, if she had no longer any need of it. The two young ladies and their mother were seated at a table covered with work and drawing materials ; and Rosina, at his earnest entreaty, was prevailed on to shew him the sketch which she had corrected according to his directions. Huntley was surprised and pleased at the intelligence with which she had acted on his hints ; he spoke to her with real interest and enthusiasm of his art ; not as if he were dressing his thoughts to please the idle fancy of a mere common-place young lady, but as if he felt he was addressing himself to one who could appreciate sense and genius. Not only Rosina,

but her mother, and sister, listened with delight. "This is a surprising young man," said Mrs. Wellford when he was gone. "I hope you will have the good sense, Rosina, to improve by his instructions without being spoilt by his praise."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Rosina hastily, "you see, mamma, he speaks to me as if I were a reasonable being, He tells me my faults." Hannah thought this was the first time her sister had ever mentioned that circumstance in any one's commendation.

The next day, and the next, and the next, Mr. Huntley "looked in," as he said, "just for a minute," to direct Rosina's pencil; and the minute was lengthened into an hour, often passed in nearly unbroken silence, but silence *that spoke*. A word, a direction, set Rosina to work with an industry and interest in her subject which precluded her joining in conversation: Huntley cast the drapery or placed the bust which she was to copy, in the right light, and then sat half behind her chair, watching his pupil's progress with real interest, and speaking from time to time to Mrs. Wellford or admiring Hannah's profile as she bent over her work. The quiet and orderliness of these *academical* proceedings, in which Mrs. Wellford always took a share, prevented her from infusing any coldness into her manner when the young artist with a whimsical, half-apologetic tone daily entered with, "Well, madam, here I am again, you see, punctual as the clock—there will be no breaking off my bad habit unless you fairly turn me out."

"So, Rosina!" said Mr. Russell one afternoon as he passed the garden gate and saw her just within it, collecting some columbine seed, "you are taking regular drawing-lessons, I find."

"Who told you so?" said she, blushing.

"What does that signify? Would it alter the case? I suppose you will be a Mrs. Raffaelle some of these days."

Whether Mr. Russell used these words in the sense in which Rosina took them, remains to be proved, but certain it is that she blushed amazingly.

"Did a little Italian boy come here this morning, with some plaster casts?" pursued he, worrying off a twig of sweet briar as he spoke.

"Oh, yea," cried Rosina starting up and letting fall her columbine seed, "I bought half his remaining stock. Luckily Mr. Huntley was here, so that he told me which were worth buying and which were not. The boy was quite a

model for a painter, was he not? Mr. Huntley had a great mind to take his likeness, and he talked to him for some time in Italian. I was so sorry I did not understand Italian! But Mr. Huntley told me the boy said his name was Domenico and that he came from Lucca."

"Which perhaps the urchin might have told *you*, if you had asked him in English. However, it is a very good thing to be able to speak Italian. Have you finished the first volume of Dr. Clarke's *Remains*?"

"Not quite. Are you in want of it?"

"No, there is no hurry—I shall not return it till Mr. Huntley goes to town, which I suppose will be this week or the next. Most probably he will be polite enough to take charge of a parcel. Good afternoon, Rosina; you have an hour's work before you, I see, in picking up that columbine seed."

Huntley often wished that Hannah had possessed Rosina's genius, or Rosina, Hannah's beauty. Fate seemed to oblige him to be most occupied with the sister who attracted him least. It was always Rosina whose drawings he had to correct, to whose accompaniment he was to sing, and to whose sallies he was to find suitable repartees: and thus, without the smallest intentional deceit, it was natural for both sisters to believe that Rosina was preferred. How it happened that Hannah's tranquil countenance and manner should have more charms for the artist than Rosina's glowing complexion, brilliant eyes, and quickness of intellect, can only be accounted for on the principle that people frequently are most attracted by their opposites. Hannah's want of genius in Huntley's favourite art vexed him no farther than as it prevented his having so much direct intercourse with her as with her sister: "it would not heighten her beauty" thought he, "nor, if she should, some happy day, become a painter's wife, would it be necessary or desirable that both of us should paint.—Easel of my easel and brush of my brush would soon cease to be either convenient or entertaining." So Huntley contentedly returned to watch Rosina's progress.

The very best efforts of a female pencil or brush must always fall far below those even of many second-rate masters. "The mind," as Dr. Johnson said of Barry, "does its part;" but the hand fails. The knowledge of anatomy is wanting, and even Angelica Kauffmann, who went through an 'ordeal to which no woman of delicacy would submit,* can only

* Her father used to take her to the Academy in boy's clothes.

claim the merit of being a *graceful* artist; a painter among ladies, but only a lady among painters. *Demi-talent* is all that is granted us. If the hand is mechanically obedient to the eye, grasp of mind and accurate knowledge of the human figure are wanting: if the imagination is brilliant, the mind is willing, but the hand is found to be weak. How should it be otherwise? When it is considered that art is long, but life is short, that the painter must rise early and study late, scarcely let an hour pass without a line, try chemical experiments for the improvement of his perishable materials, have an eye in all societies and situations for draperies, physiognomies, lights, shades, and happy effects; and that all these must be worked out on his canvass with patient labour, in spite of temptations to pleasure or idleness,—that art, in fact, besides the requisites of a cultivated mind and vigorous imagination, demands as complete an apprenticeship as any handicraft trade,—it must be seen that no woman, with the thousand breaks in on her leisure to which she is liable, can hope to arrive at perfection in this charming pursuit, consistently with the duties becoming her sex; nor would any but the most egregious vanity induce her to suppose that her casual efforts could attain that which costs men of genius a lifetime. Nevertheless, without an unjustifiable sacrifice of time, a female artist may proceed to a certain point brilliantly, and excite both pleasure and surprise, without provoking envy. We are always struck at beholding effects produced by apparently inadequate means; and intelligent artists, who are perfectly aware of the gulf between them and their female competitors, are always ready to yield indulgent praise to their graceful compositions; while the ladies are generally too proud that one of their sex should seem likely to share the wreath with haughty man, to be jealous at being individually excelled in so quiet a pursuit.

Mr. Huntley watched Rosina's progress in the same manner as a lettered sage might watch a clever little girl learning to read; feeling curious to know how far she would proceed at the same pace, though pretty certain she would never gain the lofty eminence on which he himself stood. Huntley's manner combined the indulgence and respect due to the sex of his scholar, with the sympathy of one who knew every step of the path she was treading; and the satisfaction with which he conversed with her on his favourite art, contributed to prolong the mistake into which the sisters had fallen.

There was a beautiful view to be seen from Hexley Common, at about four miles' distance from Summerfield, which

Huntley had not yet discovered; and Mrs. Wellford, finding herself unable to give him an exact direction to the spot in consequence of the variety of tracks which crossed the heath, proposed to shew him the way in the afternoon. The distance was allowed to be too great for female feet, but a donkey-chaise could be borrowed of the Miss Hollands, by means of which they might all have an agreeable excursion. The young people were charmed with the plan: and soon after an early dinner, the donkey-chaise was sent for and obtained. Mr. Russell passed the cottage at the moment that the rural equipage drew up; and on learning the object of the expedition, he said he would gladly form one of the party. The sketch-books were safely stowed beneath the seat; and Mrs. Wellford, assuming the office of charioteer, asked which of the young ladies intended to favour her with her company.

Rosina, for reasons well known to herself, had decided on walking; and she said so much more than the occasion required, about being an excellent pedestrian, never feeling tired, scorning donkey-chaises, &c., that Hannah, without more ado, took the vacant seat, and the party set off.

Mr. Russell offered his arm to Rosina, Huntley walked next to her on the opposite side, and for some little time, the whole party continued together, exchanging desultory remarks on the scenery and the weather; but presently coming to a steep cart-track, Huntley ran forward to support the chaise, which seemed to him in imminent danger of losing its balance, and he continued to keep his hand on the side rail while answering some inquiry of Mrs. Wellford's. Arrived at the end of the lane, a fine turf down opened before them; the donkey began to trot and Huntley to run, still keeping his hold on the chaise elbow and continuing his laughing dialogue with the ladies, which from the rattling of the wheels was necessarily carried on in a raised tone of voice. The clear fresh air of the heath heightned the complexions of Hannah and Huntley, each of whom thought they had never seen the other look so handsome; and the race continued till a slope in the downs carried them out of sight of Rosina and Mr. Russell. Hannah looked back after them once or twice, and asked her mother if they had not better wait.

"That is easier said than done, Hannah," replied Mrs. Wellford, smiling, as she vainly pulled the rein, "Our mag-

nanious donkey seems to have snuffed inspiration from the breezy air."

"Is this your best driving, madam?" asked Huntley, gaily, "I thought you had been a better whip. Ah, give him the rein; you are hurting your gloves more than his mouth. This unwonted speed will soon abate, depend upon it; and we may as well await our distanced companions at the foot of the next hill as any where else."

Acting on this resolution, they half traversed Hexley common.

Rosina, in the mean while, had been rather annoyed at being left behind with Mr. Russell. "He had joined them," she said to herself, "without being wanted by any body, and now had completely broken up the party."

"Had not we better walk faster?" said she, gently dragging him forward as she spoke: "they will be out of sight presently."

But no: Mr. Russell hung heavy on hand.

"We cannot keep up with them," said he composedly, "and I dare say they will wait for us at the bottom of the slope."

"Oh, don't trust to that," cried Rosina eagerly, "for I know the Holland's donkey of old, and when it once takes to trotting on Hexley-heath, it never stops till it reaches the foot of White-thorn hill.

"In that case," replied Mr. Russell, "there is still less chance of our keeping up with them; so you see, Rosina, it was a lucky thing I fell in with you, or you would have been left to yourself."

"No, that I should not, I am sure," cried Rosina, indignantly tossing her chin. "Don't you think," resumed she, again endeavouring to impel her companion a little faster, "that we had better try to gain the slope at any rate, before they are out of sight, that we may see which track they take."

"Oh!" continued Mr. Russell, "I know my way to the brow of the hill perfectly well."

"But I am not so sure that mamma does," interrupted Rosina.

"If she loses her way," replied he drily, "we are not answerable for it; since she has run away from us, not we from her. However, we shall all meet at our journey's end, I make no doubt."

Rosina could not help letting her lips betray that note of
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impatience which can only be imperfectly implied on paper by the syllable "tut!" The vexation was increased by her imperturbable companion's coming to a full stop, apparently for no other purpose than to scent the reviving air.

"Delightful!" exclaimed he at length, with a tone and countenance of keen enjoyment. "Here, indeed, as your favourite Cowper expresses it, the sense is regaled

"With luxury of unexpected sweets."

"*My* favourite Cowper!" repeated Rosina with contempt, "Hannah's favourite Cowper, if you please. I have ~~no~~ taste for such dull, prosy writers, who instead of giving airy nothings a local habitation and a name, describe just what is before their eyes and no more, with the accuracy of a *camera obscura*. The 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' is worth all that a thousand Cowpers could write. 'The Task' too! Such a name! Enough to sicken one at the very outset. There is a great deal in a name, though Juliet chose not to think so; and Cowper fixed on one equally hateful to teacher and scholar."

"Very good, Rosina!" said Mr. Russell laughing, there is much originality in what you say, and I always derive amusement from your ideas, though they are not—or more properly, *because* they are not in exact accordance with my own. As to your opinion on the subject of names, I agree with you that Miss Juliet Capulet was very unadvised when she exclaimed, 'What's in a name?' and that she would have been compelled to answer 'a great deal,' if it could have been proved that the so-called Signor Romeo Montague had no right to any other appellation than plain Stokes or Stubbs. Her love would speedily have been nipped in the bud, we may be certain. I myself am not a little proud of a name which revives associations with the noble, the brave, and the patriotic; and Mr. Huntley would fall five per cent. in your estimation, I dare say, if he were to turn out a mere Smith or Williams."

"Some people," said Rosina, "have more to boast of than their names."

"Why, that is true, too," rejoined Mr. Russell, "and I think you, Rosina, are among the number; for Wellford is not a very striking name. Rosina is pretty and Italian-like enough, but Wellford has not much to recommend it. Take my advice, therefore, and change it as soon as possible."

"Really, Mr. Russell——" exclaimed Rosina very pettishly.

"Really what, Miss Rosina?"

"Why, you sometimes sicken me of sense; but your nonsense is ten times worse."

Mr. Russell laughed with such thorough good humour at this speech, that Rosina, fearful of having rather exceeded the bounds of propriety, began to think she might as well treat him with a little more consideration. She was also aware that she was exposing herself to ridicule by displaying so much vexation at having been forsaken by Huntley. For the next ten minutes, therefore, all was smooth and agreeable.

At the expiration of that time, our walkers gained the top of the slope, and could perceive no traces of their companions on the wide-extended heath before them. Rosina's irritation now returned, and she declared that it was ill-natured of her mother and Hannah to leave her behind, as she was growing very tired.

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Russell, "then you sadly over-rated your powers when you said you were sure you could walk to Hexley-hill and back without fatigue! Bless me, what can be done in ~~this~~ emergency? How came you so to deceive yourself? But perhaps," added he, glancing slyly at her delicate *chaussure* and the pretty French glove that rested on his arm, "perhaps your fatigue in some measure depends on who is your companion."

Rosina was too much provoked to answer.

"Well then," pursued the abominable Russell, "as silence gives consent, I am to infer that Huntley is the happy man. Poor me! What shall I do to render myself less obnoxious? Shall we turn back? I am entirely at your disposal.—No.—Well then, let us make the best of our way forward, and I will make myself as agreeable as I can. Shall I carry your parasol for you?—you won't let me—come, then, that little bag; I long to be of service. Are there any sandwiches in it?"

"As if I should carry sandwiches!" said Rosina half-laughing.

"It might be worse filled, though—this air is what Mr. Greenway calls 'very appetizing.' Are you quite ~~sure~~ you are not deceiving me—No—here are a cambric handkerchief, a smelling-bottle, and some keys—oh, I understand pockets are gone out of fashion."

" You are mistaken, there are no keys."

" Are there not—I thought there were. By the by, Rosina, I have some news for you."

" Have you?"

" Yes—concerning an old flirt and favourite of yours. Can you guess whom I mean?"

" No indeed."

" Try."

" An old favourite."

" And flirt too—very, very old."

" I am sure I cannot imagine," said Rosina, carelessly, " unless it is Lewis Pennington."

" *Unless!* that is a lucky guess of yours, Rosina. Yes, Lewis Pennington it is. I had a letter from him this morning. He has left Oxford, and writes to tell me that—what do you think?"

" How can I tell what to think—Lewis and I used to be very good friends when we were children, but really that is so long ago, that I have nearly forgotten him. How can I guess what he has written about?"

" 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba;'" repeated Mr. Russell; " but indeed, Rosina, you must shew a little more curiosity respecting my intelligence before I communicate it. News, you know, is a London staple; and as silks, ribbons, bobbins, every thing from the great metropolis, has a neat little profit tacked on to it by the country retailer, so news is by far too scarce an article in a small hamlet, to be disposed of for nothing. Come, guess, guess!—I had nearly said 'an' thou lovest me.'"

Certainly Mr. Russell seems a little touched this morning, thought Rosina: what can have made him so exceedingly absurd?

" I suppose," said she with as unconcerned a tone and look as possible, " Lewis is going to be married. If that is not it, I have nothing else to guess. Whatever it is I care very little about it."

" Can that be true, Rosina?"

" Quite true, I assure you, Mr. Russell."

" Oh, very well!" said he with a mischievous smile, " I will not waste my news on a person who does not care for it; and if, as I shrewdly suspect, this indifference is only assumed, you will deservedly punish yourself. Take care, however, that the news, when it *does* reach you, as reach you it certainly will, does not come on you like a thunderbolt."

"A thunderbolt! how absurd!" said Rosina.

"We shall see!" said Mr. Russell, smiling.

He then continued to walk on, silently knocking about the flints and pebbles which lay in the path with his cane; till Rosina, who was secretly curious to know his mighty intelligence, asked him if he expected, like the Duke in "As you like it," to find a sermon in the stones.

"Why, possibly this flint," said Mr. Russell, picking one up from beneath his feet, "might, if it had a tongue, chatter quite as much to the purpose as many bipeds. 'For what reason,' we may imagine it to exclaim, 'am I left here in inglorious solitude, wedged in coarse marble, or kicked out of the way by every clouted peasant that crosses this path to pursue his daily labour, when many other flints, by no means so comely as myself, are selected by the partial hand of man to raise the cottage wall, or emit the generous spark?' Ah, foolish flint! you know not of what you complain. Borne hence in the object of your ambition, viz., the flint-gatherer's basket, you would find yourself exposed to many rude buffets in that world, which, at distance seen, so allures your inexperienced imagination. Hard blows from the workman's trowel, or stunning thumps against the sturdy steel, administered by the greasy hands of a cookmaid; and even in repose—what repose! the filthy darkness of a kitchen drawer! Be grateful to me, mistress Flint, for restoring you to your inglorious but peaceful abode in the footpath, where the soft breeze blows over you, the blue sky shines above you, and the gorse and heather bloom at your side; and know that your fate is a type of many a charming fair who sighs 'for the gaiety of high life, but is luckily condemned to remain in that seclusion where, would she but discover it, the truest happiness is to be found! Well, Rosina, have I discoursed most eloquent nonsense?"

"Certainly, Mr. Russell," said she, smiling, as she felt her ill-humour rapidly thawing away, "you are a very odd sort of person, and though you like teasing a little sometimes, it is impossible to be out of temper with you long together."

"Out of temper!" exclaimed he; "'do you confess so much? Give me thy hand!' Come, Rosina, answer as Brutus did,

"And my heart with it!"

I will put no unfair interpretation on the words, I promise

you. You won't? Well then I must say that you are a very odd sort of person too, and that it is impossible to be out of temper with *you* long together. We have made up our reconciliation just in time; for sure enough there is the donkey-chaise where you said it would be, at the foot of the Whitemore hill. So now it will be but fair that Hannah and Huntley should be left to toil in the rear as we have done, while Mrs. Wellford, you, and I ascend the hill with the speed of the wind."

Not even the conclusion of this speech could now put Rosina out of humour. She walked forward briskly, and they soon came up with the donkey-chaise party, who looked the picture of content. Huntley ran towards Rosina as she approached, and offered her his arm. Thus supported on either side, she told Hannah she could very well walk up the hill, though her late complaints to Mr. Russell shamed her from again maintaining that she felt no fatigue. They all proceeded to their place of destination; Rosina conversing with Huntley in high spirits, and in the overflowing of her satisfaction, bestowing many smiles and lively sallies on Mr. Russell.

"Aha!" thought he to himself, "my young lady is fairly caught for the present; but it will not last long, and I know why."

Without stopping to search into the meaning of this mysterious "I know why," we must proceed to the summit of the hill, where Mr. Huntley, as all had expected, was much struck with the view which opened before him. It was too extensive, however, he said, to be a fit subject for a sketch: it was vast, but not picturesque. Much was discussed learnedly and unlearnedly, on *coups d'œil*, grand masses, broken fore-grounds, light and shade. At length Mrs. Wellford proposed returning.

"Mr. Russell does not seem quite ready to go," observed Rosina. "See how pensively he stands with folded arms, quite absorbed in meditation! What are you considering, Mr. Russell?"

"Nothing very particular," replied he, turning round with a smile, "I was merely letting myself be breathed on by this delicious wind; or, if I was thinking at all, I believe it was that I felt rather hungry."

"What a poetical confession!" exclaimed Rosina; "I expected to find you had been engaged in some very sublime speculation."

" Give me leave to ask, Miss Rosina Wellford, have you dined?"

" Yes, I have."

" Well, I have not; therefore, the next time we compare the relative sublimity of our ideas, pray let us start fair on this point. At present, you have the advantage of me."

The laugh was now against Rosina. Hannah offered to walk, and her younger sister seated herself in the chaise without complaint. The walkers and riders kept more together on their return than they had done before; and on reaching the White Cottage they separated with mutual expressions of satisfaction at their excursion.

CHAPTER XI.

PAINTING AL FRESCO.

THE request was made and finally granted. Huntley, whose secret admiration of Hannah was daily acquiring greater warmth and reality, at first playfully, then seriously, entreated her to sit to him for her picture, and begged Mrs. Wellford to add her persuasions to his own. The mother's pride in her daughter's beauty was gratified; she was also gained by Huntley's manner; which seemed to attach just sufficient, without too great, importance to the favour—respectful and unassuming, though tinctured with enthusiasm. Hannah was astonished at the proposal, and shrank with natural aversion from deliberately sitting to be looked at; but when Huntley smilingly said he would not insist on her fixing her eyes on his ugly face, lamented the difficulty of finding good studies, and in conclusion, proposed some fancy subject in which he might also introduce the portraits of her mother and sister, Hannah softened, and at length yielded a reluctant consent. The subject was rapidly chosen by the enthusiastic painter. It should be the departure of Ruth and Naomi for the Holy Land, and their parting from Orpah. Hannah's exquisite head was not of the oriental style, but no matter; its character admirably expressed the moral beauty, grace, dignity, and devotedness of the lovely Meabitess. Rosina's darker complexion would suit the affectionate though inconstant Orpah.

excellently well ; and Mrs. Wellford's deeply shadowed eyes and expressive countenance beneath a Jewish head-dress could not fail to give interest to Naomi. Rosina was enchanted with the subject, and her mother and sister were scarcely less struck with Huntley's genius, when they saw his rough sketch from the text, "Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her." The woman of many sorrows was seen turning her cheek to the retiring Orpah, while Ruth supporting her arm and waist, looked up in her face with tender devotedness as she prepared to lead her faltering steps through the scorching desert which opened before them. In the distance, amid palms and terebinths, were seen the walls and towers of the city to which Orpah was returning, while overhead was the glowing sky of an eastern climate. Nothing had been forgotten which was necessary to the complete developement of the scene. Rosina saw at a glance, that Huntley's sketch of her figure possessed much of the *beau ideal*, and attributed to his partiality what she should rather have laid to his science. The pannel, colours, and brushes arrived in a few days from town : the former not exceeding the size of a cabinet picture, as Huntley maintained that what would be gained by increased space, would be lost in delicacy, and that grandeur of design might as well be compressed into a gem as expanded on an altar-piece. The question now became, where should the sittings take place ? The parlour was too small to render the apparatus of oil-painting very convenient or the smell very endurable ; besides which, the casement window, clustered with jessamine, did not admit a sufficiently broad light. It was unanimously resolved to place the easel in the garden beneath the huge walnut tree. The hedge was so high and thick, as to prevent much chance of being overlooked ; but with the assistance of Betty's clothes-props, lines and pegs, a sufficiently picturesque drapery was stretched beneath the greenwood-tree to screen them entirely from observation, and prevent the fluttering of the leaves from interrupting the light. Rosina, delighted with the romance and novelty of the plan, the more so that it had been suggested by the painter himself, thought of many little improvements, which she effected with great ingenuity and self-approval. Behold, then, the artist-lover, the walnut-shade his studio, the sun and air the ready dryers of his colours and the green foliage and purple distance the appropriate back-ground of his '*tableau vivant*.' Rosina twined her mother an exquisite turban from Huntley's fancy

sketch ; the sketch was improved from the turban, and the turban again from the sketch, so that no head-dress could be more faultless. It seemed a sin to cover more of Hannah's silky tresses than was absolutely necessary with a muslin veil, carelessly thrown back ; and Rosina wound a crimson scarf round her own dark braids in a manner which she defied Mr. Huntley to prove had never been the fashion in Moab, and which was too becoming for him seriously to cavil at. An hour was spent in arranging every thing conveniently ; in making the easel stand firm on the uneven ground ; in picking the teasing little flies out of Huntley's oils and paints ; and in contriving that the sun should shine on the ladies without tanning or blinding them. All these difficulties being mastered, Huntley commenced his work with the most commendable alacrity. Of the three sitters, or rather *standers*, Rosina had certainly secretly felt by far the greatest pleasure at the idea of having her picture taken by Mr. Huntley ; yet, sooth to say, she was first to feel tired. What she would have liked would have been to sit in a chair, so that she could see the artist, and every other minute to jump up and watch his progress : instead of which, till the outline was got in, Huntley begged them all to stand as still as possible, in easy attitudes, which, as she truly observed, "were mighty difficult," her lips on the point of touching her mother's cheek, and her figure in such a graceful twist as to give her an intolerable pain in the side. To do him justice, Huntley allowed them a momentary change of posture every five minutes, and promised to relieve two of the three in a quarter of an hour : but his often-repeated "one minute more" lasted much longer than he had led them to believe, and the earnestness with which he worked made him terribly silent. At length the ladies were released from their purgatory ; the general effect, he told them was obtained ; and they gathered round the easel to wonder and admire. Their encomiums were such as might have satisfied any man not bent on insisting that his admirers should be thoroughly competent judges of his art ; the picture was "lovely," "striking," "astonishing." Huntley now began to bring up the back-ground to the same state of forwardness with the figures ; during which time, the ladies, much interested in the novel handling of a kind of colours entirely new to them, watched his progress and expressed their delight at every new effect. Hannah went away, and presently returned with some beautiful raspberries. Rosina observed it was a good thought, and ran off to gather enough

for the whole party. Meantime, Hannah had given a few to her mother, and was going to offer the remainder to Mr. Huntley, when she blushed slightly, and said she would fetch a plate.

"As if," said Huntley, stopping her and looking expressively, "the finest china would make them more acceptable!"

Hannah coloured again, but gave him the fruit with perfect simplicity; and Rosina soon returned with a more abundant supply. They carelessly laughed and chatted till all the raspberries were eaten, and Huntley then returned to his work, which he pursued till the village clock warned him and his charming companions that they must separate for dinner. In the afternoon, Mrs. Wellford desired her daughters to carry a trifling message to Mrs. Greenway. They were just quitting the cottage when they met Mr. Huntley at the door. "He had just looked in," he said, "not to paint, but to see his morning's work with fresh eyes." They all accompanied him to the walnut-tree, beneath which it still stood, that the sun might dry it quickly; and notwithstanding his resolution, the pallet offered itself so temptingly to his hand that he could not resist touching up something which it would be a pity to leave in its present state. Once with the magic brush in his fingers, it seemed impossible to lay it down; and Hannah deceived at first into the belief that his one minute would literally consist only of sixty seconds, aroused herself from her trance and reminded Rosina of their mission.

"Are you going?" said Huntley pathetically.

"Indeed Mr. Huntley," said Mrs. Wellford, who had never seen painting thus taken by storm, and began to be alarmed for his health, "I think it would be much better for you to lay aside your brushes and take a walk also. You have painted many hours and I am sure your mind must want unbending."

Huntley's brushes were immediately relinquished. Whether Mrs. Wellford had intended that *his* walk should be in the same direction with her daughters', or not, he chose to understand that it was to be so, and the pallet was instantly cleared. He requested the young ladies to grant him one more minute's patience; and as soon as his brushes were washed, he accompanied them on their walk. A lovely day was now giving place to a still more lovely evening, and the spirits and tempers of the trio were in happy tune.

Rosina's first inquiry was, "Pray, Mr. Huntley, are you a prophet?"

"Not that I am aware of," replied he alertly, as if prepar-

ing for an encounter of wits.—“If I were, I would tell your fortune immediately; but what occasioned the question?”

“Simply because the prophets of old used to reckon years as days, and your *minutes* seemed to me to bear the same proportion to ordinary estimates of time.”

Huntley laughed, though he did not appear exactly to know to what she referred.

“Mr. Huntley does not understand you, Rosina,” said Hannah, with a quiet smile that seemed to say ‘*I do*.’

“Why, have you not often threatened me with a *minute’s* drawing-lesson,” pursued Rosina, “which has as often been lengthened into an hour? and did you not cheat poor Hannah into standing twenty minutes in a most uncomfortable position by telling her she should be released from it in a moment? Did you not mean to paint only a minute this afternoon, and to be occupied another minute in washing your brushes?”

Huntley now laughed gaily. “The fact is,” said he, “that it is impossible to take note of time in the Misses Wellfords’ society.”

“Ah, Mr. Huntley, I dare say you use all your sitters just as unfairly.”

“Perhaps I do,—when they fascinate me equally,—I leave you to decide how often that is likely to be the case.”

“Painting must be a very fascinating pursuit,” said Hannah, trying to turn the conversation to generals.

“Undoubtedly it must be,” said Rosina—“Oh! there is Mrs. Greenway, I declare! Just going into Mrs. Good’s. I must try to deliver mamma’s message before the servant opens the door.”

Away she ran, leaving Hannah and Mr. Huntley to follow her at their leisure. They did so in perfect silence, though Huntley longed to speak. Just as he thought of something to say to his beautiful companion, they were re-joined by Rosina.

“This is certainly too warm weather for running!” exclaimed she.

“There is no need of our going to Mrs. Greenway’s now,” said Hannah. “What shall we do? Go home?”

“Home!” exclaimed both her companions at once.

“Surely not,” said Huntley.

“Where shall we go then?” inquired Hannah.

“Let us sit down on the bench just beneath the church-yard,” said Rosina, “till I have recovered myself, and then we can go into Okely Park. We have scarcely walked half a mile.”

They accordingly proceeded to the seat, which had been erected by some forgotten emulator of the Man of Ross. It was nearly at the point where Mr. Russell had first seen Huntley.

"How pleasant rest is when we are tired!" said Rosina.

"Yes, and how pleasant recreation is when we have earned it by industry!" said Huntley. "Even *alone*, such weather and scenery as this would be delightful; but with companions, feminine companions!—One is so glad, too, of having gained a point: I began to be afraid, at *one* time, Miss Wellford, that I should leave Summerfield without having painted your picture."

Hannah felt she was expected to speak, yet knew not exactly what to say. She was not so ready in framing playful declamatory speeches as her sister.

"It was a bold project, certainly," pursued Huntley. "How many arguments and persuasions, how many little arts was I obliged to use, before I could attain it!" He looked at her with a smile full of earnest meaning, and Hannah's eyes sank to the ground. Rosina saw the look. 'I am glad—yes, I am glad,' thought she, 'that he does justice to Hannah's beauty—no painter could fail to admire that sweet countenance; but his conversation, his instruction, and his playful wit, are all reserved for me.' While trying to convince herself that this was really the case, she was unconscious how long they had sat in thoughtful silence, when quick cheerful voices, at no great distance, roused each of them from their reveries; and looking round they perceived Mr. Russell and another gentleman passing through the church-yard gate. "Another *rara avis*?" thought Hannah, as she rose to pursue her walk; while Rosina gave a look, first of careless inquiry, and next of half-doubting surprise, at the stranger. He was a tall, striking looking young man of about one and twenty, with a prepossessing countenance, which at this moment was beaming with gaiety and good humour. "Hannah! Hannah!" exclaimed Rosina, in a suppressed but energetic tone, "I think,—yes, I am sure,—it is Lewis Pennington!"

Lewis, who could hardly have recognized Rosina, had he not been told by his companion that the two young ladies before him were the Misses Wellford's, approached with a gladness of manner equally free from embarrassment and exaggeration. "Rosina!" said he, half doubtful of being remembered. Her bright glance instantly shewed that she

knew him perfectly well, and she held out her hand with a smile of pleasure, as she said, "Who would have thought of seeing you in Summerfield, Mr. Pennington?" She immediately introduced him to her sister, and named to him Mr. Huntley, whom Lewis Pennington measured with his eyes from head to foot, as he bowed to him with great grace but a little haughtiness.

"This spot seems destined for the scene of pleasant meetings," said Mr. Russell to Huntley with a smile. Then turning to Rosina, "Well," said he, did not I serve you right in not telling you that your old playfellow and *preux chevalier* was coming to the vicarage? You remember the provocation."

Rosina coloured. "We were just coming to call on you," pursued Mr. Russell; "shall we all proceed to the White Cottage together, or have you any other plan in view?"

"We will return, by all means," said Hannah. Huntley immediately offered her his arm, and she accepted it with a slight blush; wondering whether Mr. Russell would think it strange. Lewis and Rosina led the way, he drawing her arm beneath his with the security of an old friend, and marvelling at the growth and exceeding prettiness of the little girl whom he had so often tempted into or extricated from scrapes, as events might happen; while she with a thousand questions relative to Stoke Barton acquaintance hovering on her lips, scarcely felt sufficiently at ease with him to give them utterance. Five minutes sufficed to shew however that if Lewis had added some inches to his height and some manhood to his countenance and carriage since they had last seen each other, his manners were nearly as carelessly boyish as ever. Meanwhile they were putting a gradually increasing space between themselves and the more leisurely walkers behind.

"What was that Mr. Russell said about *provocation*?" said Lewis, smiling archly after answering a few of her inquiries respecting his family.

"Provocation?" repeated Rosina, affecting forgetfulness.

"Yes, something in connection with you and me, was it not? Ah, you remember it, I see, by your blushing."

"Blush, Mr. Pennington!" said Rosina disdainfully, "I assure you I do no such thing."

"Nay, no offence, Rosina," replied, he with perfect complacence. "Even if I judged wrongly, you know the mistake did not amount to a crime. Dr. what's his name—the

oracle of you ladies—Dr. Gregory says, that a blush is the most powerful charm of beauty. At least I have Marianne's authority for saying so, for you may be sure I never read his precious stuff about friendship, love, and matrimony, myself. But *Mr. Pennington*? What do you mean by that? Not to affront me I hope. You know we are cousins; and I do not mean to relinquish my cousinly privilege of calling you Rosina, I assure you. And I hope that to you I shall always be Lewis, as I was in old times. Dear old times, I was going to call them; but they were not very dear to you who were so brutally treated by Mrs. Parkinson. By the by, that woman, whom I have never forgiven, has left Park Place, time indefinite, to wander up and down the face of the earth, felicity hunting, with her poor worn-out husband and old Mrs. Diana. A charming party to travel over the continent with; don't you think so? I was rather astonished they did not invite Mr. Curtis to make a fourth, for Mrs. Parkinson can scarcely bear him to be out of her sight; but perhaps Curtis was wise and preferred peace and quiet to an annuity."

"But Lewis, you have not told me a word of dear Marianne."

"Oh, Marianne is as much altered as you are, though the girl will never be handsome. However, she is sharp and good-humoured, which does quite as well for a sister. My father is not a day older than when you saw him, and as lively and indulgent as ever. I was the envy of half the men in Oxford, in that respect. Nothing to do but to write for money, and it was sure to come without any sermonizing. To be sure, he once made me feel rather ashamed of myself—"

"How was that?" inquired Rosina.

"Oh," said Lewis laughing, and switching the hedge with cane," the long and the short of the business was, that I had been extravagant; and actually felt myself blushing as red as fire when I wrote for fresh supplies. I half expected they would not be remitted: however, the letter came with the needful inclosure, and a line to say that Dr. Pennington had great pleasure in paying his son's *necessary* expenses, though the poor must this winter suffer for it, and that, to be sure, the *repetition* of such a demand as the last would oblige him to put down his carriage, a very needless luxury to a hale old man and four healthy females. How hot I felt at that moment! Bills must be paid, you know; there was no help for that; but I was as stingy as Harpagon all the rest of the term; and the next time I saw my father, I wrung his hand

and vowed I never would exceed my allowance again. He hoped I should keep my promise, wished he could afford me more, and we were as good friends as ever."

"Dear, excellent man! But your mother, Lewis, and your brothers and sisters—"

"Oh, Ned is at Madras; Sophy and Isabella are with Caroline at the Isle of Wight, recruiting their complexions after a London campaign, and the young ones are pursuing the same routine under Mademoiselle Mackau as we did before them. By the by, that French woman wears uncommonly well. What with her rouge and false hair, nobody would suppose her more than thirty; and she dresses with as much coquettish precision as ever."

"Rouge! has Mademoiselle Mackau taken to rouge?"

"My father and mother cry 'pshaw! nonsense! no such thing!' but Marianne and I are convinced of it. You know what teeth and eyes she has. When I first came home, Mademoiselle positively looked so handsome that I had a great mind to strike up a flirtation; but considering that she had helped me through the hard words in 'L'Ami des Enfans,' it proved too ridiculous. However, we still often have a little *scene*. Mademoiselle stands secure in the consciousness of having refused several good offers, and has no objection to a little harmless rattle."

"We have quite outwalked Hannah and Mr. Russell," said Rosina, looking back; "shall we not wait for them?"

"Certainly we will. What a sweet countenance your sister has! And who is that Mr. Hunter? Are they engaged?"

"Oh dear no!"

"Oh dear no?" repeated he, laughing, that look and tone give me reason to suspect something in another quarter."

"You may suspect whatever you like, but you are talking quite at random."

"Oh, I shall be more *au fait* by and by: I have pretty quick eyes, and shall make my silent observations."

"Silent observations! horrible!" exclaimed Rosina. "Pray do not trouble yourself to do any thing so disagreeable."

"Oh, I shall not mind its being disagreeable," said Lewis.

"But I shall, I assure you," cried Rosina, "for nothing is so—"

"So what?"

She did not reply, and he maliciously continued,

"Oh, I shall keep a good look-out on this Mr. Hunter. Is he one of the neighbouring gentry?"

"No."

"Where is he staying then?"

"At the inn."

"Oh!"

At this moment, the person in question, together with Hannah and Mr. Russell came within earshot. They were speaking of Huntley's Picture, which Mr. Russell was curious to see.

"What is this picture they are talking of?" inquired Lewis of Rosina as they pursued their walk.

"Oh, a beautiful painting of Mr. Huntley's, in which he is introducing all our likenesses."

"Soho!" cried Lewis, raising his eyebrows, "then he is nothing but a portrait painter after all!"

"Hush, Lewis, he will overhear you. You are mistaken."

"What, is he only an amateur, then?"

"Why,—not exactly.—He is a very distinguished artist."

"I never heard his name," observed Lewis drily.

"You will, some of these days," said Rosina with quickness; "Mr. Russell says he is a very great genius."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Lewis.

"As a proof of it," continued Rosina, "he not only paints but is extremely well read in poetry and the classics, knows a great deal of history, and sings delightfully. I am even not quite sure that he does not write verses."

"So much the worse for his painting," said Lewis.

"Not at all," cried Rosina, "an artist, as well as every one else, must have occasional recreations; and how much better are these than gambling and associating with low company?"

"Perhaps he may do that too."

"I am certain he does not."

"Oh," said Lewis with a smile, "I see you are talking of Mr. Hunter. I thought you were speaking of artists in general. Heaven forbid that I should accuse or suspect a man of whom I know nothing, and who may be better than myself. It would be ill-bred as well as illiberal for me to pretend to judge of Mr. Hunter—"

"Mr. Huntley."

"Huntley, I beg his pardon.—Of Mr. Huntley's merits or demerits. What do I know of him? By the by, that is a pretty little cottage—"

"That is *our* cottage," said Rosina, feeling rather ashamed of it for the first time. "It is very small—"

"But quite large enough for happiness, without doubt. Oh I am quite an advocate for cottages, I assure you. To

say truth, I went through a pretty severe course of novels last winter, when I had a sprained ankle."

"Ah! mamma has had the tea things placed under the walnut-tree!" cried Rosina joyfully, "How very pleasant."

CHAPTER XII.

▲ TEA-PARTY UNDER A WALNUT TREE.

Mrs. Wellford had expected Huntley to return with her daughters, but she was rather surprised to see an addition of two gentlemen to the party, and still more surprised to be introduced to Lewis Pennington. As the son of an old and highly valued friend, and in some sort as a relation, she gave him a most cordial reception, and immediately expressed her hope that he and Mr. Russell would join their little tea-party. Every one was pleased with the idea of drinking tea out of doors; and Hannah, having laid aside her bonnet and parasol, took her accustomed seat as president.

So many inquiries after Stoke Barton friends required answers from Lewis, that the picture was at first forgotten. Mr. Russel at length looked round for it, and Huntley brought it from the house.

Mr. Russell was even more struck with the painting than had been expected, and seemed scarcely to know which most to praise, the design or the execution. Huntley was gratified by his criticisms, which were those of a man of taste though not a connoisseur. Lewis was disposed to be pleased with every thing, yet he could not make due allowances for the first stage of colour, and cavilled at the brickdust hue of Orpah's complexion. He said he should like to have been reminded of Sir Joshua Reynolds's colouring, rather than of the dirty Jewesses in Monmouth-street, and advised Mr. Huntley to inquire of Fuseli where "a velvet brush dipped in honey" was to be found. He should paint Miss Rosina Wellford's portrait with no other. Rosina said "pshaw!" but Lewis did not think she looked very angry. They were now summoned by Hannah to the tea-table.

"And pray, Lewis, how came Summerfield to be honoured

by your presence?" inquired Mrs. Wellford; "was this excursion premeditated, or *al improvise?*"

He laughed and replied, "Oh, there was nothing to keep me at home, and Russell had written such fluent praises of this part of the country, that I thought I should like to come and look about me. Next year I shall travel; and it is foolish of a man to go abroad ~~before~~ he has seen his own country."

"Are you going then, to make the tour of England?"

"Why—I don't exactly know about that—I shall probably go a little further west, and loiter about for a few weeks, here and there, wherever I find any thing to please me."

"How extremely like he is to his mother!" said Mrs. Wellford to Mr. Russell. "The same eyes—"

"Not quite," said Lewis, "her's are dark blue, and mine are grey, I do not wish my eyes to deceive you, ma'am, even in colour."

"And yet, again, your nose is certainly something of the doctor's—"

"I had rather be like him in any thing else," observed Lewis slyly. "What do you say, Rosina? You have seen my father since Mrs. Wellford has. Are our noses alike?"

"I am sure I do not know," said Rosina, in a tone as if she had never seen a nose in her life.

"Betwixt eyes and nose a strange contest arose," said Lewis, laughing; "and I deny that mine has that venerable arch in the middle, or that rotundity at the lower extremity which characterizes my father's organ of scent. Nay, if I have any vanity, it is of this very feature; and when I swear, (which I assure you, ladies, is but seldom,) it is always 'by my nose.'"

"You need not be affronted, Lewis, at being thought like your father, for at the time I married, he was a very handsome man."

"So he is still, for his age; but my mother, I think, is more altered, though her manner is as full of cheerfulness and sweetness as ever. Her's has been a life of more anxiety and care; she has had a large family to attend to, and a great deal of ill health. Thank God, she is now tolerably well, but I do not know what ~~she~~ would have done with us all if it had not been for Mademoiselle Mackau."

"Your mother was a charming woman when I knew her."

"So she is, ma'am, to this day. I did not always know her value. Rosina may remember that, as children, we al-

ways had her rather mere in dread than my father. Well, when I had been from home a few months, I began, like many other fools, to think it was exceedingly weak of me to be held any longer in petticoat thraldom, and resolved quietly to throw aside the yoke at the first opportunity. Will you believe it? —on returning with my tastes somewhat matured, and my knowledge of men and women more enlarged, I found myself for the first time capable of appreciating this admirable mother, and aware of the distinction of possessing her friendship. Stay, surely she charged me with a letter to you. I believe it is in my portmanteau. Is this it? —Oh no, this is one to you, Rosina, from Marianne, which had slipped my memory. I now recollect her stuffing something into my pocket just as I was mounting my horse, with some injunction which I had not time to listen to."

"For shame!" cried Rosina, tearing it open, "I dare say you have forgotten some message which I should have thought of great importance."

"If I had known it had been for you," replied he, "I would have paid more attention to her, certainly, but I thought she had merely been giving me some biscuits to prevent my starving on the road. Marianne has always so many 'last words' when I am on the point of setting out on a ride, either a charge to scold the woman at the library for not sending her the last volume of some novel, or a message to the milliner, or a note to drop at aunt Margaret's, that I now only hear her mechanically, and cry 'ay, ay, depend upon me,' without being quite clear whether I am to go to the aunt's, the milliner's, or the librarian's."

"You do not deserve such a sister as Marianne, I am afraid, Lewis," said Mr. Russell.

"Nobody deserves her!" replied he with energy.

"Nobody in Stoke Barton, you mean. I hope she is not of your way of thinking."

"Pretty nearly so, I believe—she is inexorable."

"Rosina used to describe you and your sister Marianne as nearly inseparable," said Hannah.

"So we are still, when I am at home," replied he. "My father says that Marianne-and-Lewis seem always connected with hyphens."

"Quite like Viola and Sebastian," said Huntley.

"Not exactly," said Lewis—"their resemblance was more of person than mind—ours is more of mind than person."

Rosina had now hastily skimmed the contents of her letter.

A few lines towards the conclusion made her blush rosy red; and wishing to appear unconcerned, she said as she folded it up, " You seem to have had a very gay spring at Stoke Barton."

" Such gaiety as a country town always affords," answered Lewis—" a regular succession of parties, beginning with the Sowards and ending with the Trotters."

" Seward ? Trotter ?" repeated Mrs. Wellford—" there were no such names in the town when I left Park-Place."

" And yet we count them among our old established set now. Oh, there are many among us, compared with whom, the Sowards and Trotters are quite antique. I dare say, Mrs. Wellford, you would hardly know Stoke Barton again—four or five-and-twenty years in these stirring times make an immense difference. I myself can recollect when we had neither circulating library, music shop, nor savings' bank; when Cotton-row was not built; when there was only one pastry-cook's, one linen-draper's, and one tallow-chandler's ! Now we have two handsome inns, two apothecaries, a physician, and a silversmith ! Does not that speak for the growing importance of Stoke Barton ? But you would see no alteration in Park-Place. It stands aloof from the town with the same demure dignity as ever, and the stately old trees have not as yet become the prey of a thirstless heir. Young James Parkinson, perhaps, may make the axe play amongst them freely some of these days."

" I hope not," said Mrs. Wellford.

" So do I," said Lewis, " for I have lain so often under their shade, that I look upon them in some measure as my own property."

" If such a claim as that could be made good in a court of law," said Huntley, " I should have as pretty an estate as any man in the kingdom."

" Possession is nine points of the law," said Lewis, " and there is many a nook in the woods of Park-Place which I and the squirrels have hitherto had to ourselves;—a certain bank, in particular, that will always be associated in my mind with Froissart."

" Ah ! how often have I wished to read Froissart !" exclaimed Rosina.

" I think you would be disappointed in him," said Huntley.

" Disappointed in Froissart !" exclaimed Lewis. " I can only say that *I* devoured his pages with the keenest delight,

and that his chronicle appeared to me the most vivid and entertaining picture of the times that could well be imagined."

"And what times were they?" rejoined Huntley. "Times when every public and private duty was violated and the most atrocious crimes committed without exciting surprise."

"Times full of romantic incident, however," said Lewis.

"Yes, the incidents were romantic; but Froissart has a dry, uninteresting way of telling them. How much more he might have made of some of his stories, by inserting some particulars and omitting many others!"

"You are difficult to please, sir. To me, I must confess, his gossiping style has something quaint, racy, and delightful. He tells you the whole affair from beginning to end, so that it seems to rise before your eyes—how that Sir John Chandos sat at meat when young Earl Pembroke's page, after a night of peril, brought him the token ring—how he washed his hands, and sat moodily deliberating before he resolved to forget old affronts and go to the earl's assistance. All this gives a great deal of spirit and life—"

"But does not argue much more genius for narration than that possessed by every old nurse.—He makes no selection A modern writer would select."

"And leave nothing but the bare skeleton" said Lewis. "I like dead heroes to stand before me in all the reality of flesh and blood. How I revelled over the exploits of that old Sir John Chandos! And how I loved the pleasant stories of Sir Espaign de Lyon as he and Froissart rode at a bridle pace beside some fair river! How I enjoyed the gossipry of the gallant squires and pages, as they sat round the fire at the court of Bearn, each man telling his tale of war or love! How my blood curdled at the murder of little Gaston de Foix! Do you find any thing more poetical in Chaucer? Ah! a man must be fastidious who cannot relish Froissart! How say *you* Russell?"

"To tell you the truth, Lewis," replied Mr. Russell, "I never read Froissart!"

The tea equipage being now removed, Hannah brought her mother's work-bag and her own netting from the parlour, and accepted Lewis's offer of holding the skein of silk she was about to wind. On looking round when his task was half finished, Lewis perceived that Mr. Huntley was helping Rosina to water her flowers, and he immediately began to wish himself at liberty. As soon as he was released, he walked towards the flower border, and seeing a pretty rose, he stopped to gather it.

"Oh, Lewis," cried Rosina, in terror, part real and part affected, "you positively shall not have that Provence rose ! it is the only one I have. Any other that you will, moss, damask, or China."

"With all my heart," said Lewis ; "a rose, gathered by myself, would do only to smell twice or thrice and throw over the hedge ; whereas one presented by you will have an extrinsic value."

"It is a Spanish compliment you know, to give a rose to a stranger."

"Are you resolved to call *me* one ?"

"Well, which colour will you have ?"

"The colour of the lips of a young lady of my acquaintance—no ; not that—it is too pale."

"How can I tell what colour you mean ?" said Rosina, stooping over her roses ; "will this do ?"

"Yes," said he softly ; taking the rose, and playfully approaching it to her lips. Rosina hastily turned away and nearly ran against Mr. Huntley, who was returning with her replenished watering-pot.

"Are you giving away flowers, Miss Rosina, like another Perdita ?" said he. "I am sure I have earned one."

"No, no," said Lewis, laughing, "they are all for me."

"How can you say so ?" said Rosina scornfully. "Mr. Huntley *has* earned one very fairly. Here, Mr. Huntley, is a perfect beauty ! You deserve one for filling my watering-pot."

"This is lovely enough to inspire a troubadour," said Huntley ; and he immediately began to hum

"Oh ! my love is like the red, red rose !"

His balmy voice reached the party under the walnut-tree ; Mr. Russell called out to beg he would "go on ;" and laughing, "as though he scorned himself for singing," Huntley continued with more emphasis, though still in an apparently careless *sotto voce* manner, to run through the second verse of the ballad. No woman, musical enough to appreciate simple melody, and youthful enough to believe in the possibility of her having excited interest in the young painter's heart, could have listened unmoved to his enunciation of

"And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till the sands of life are run."

Its pathos was attested by a gentle sigh from the bosom of each of the younger ladies ; and Lewis with an impatient suspiration wished fate had enabled him to sing as well ; and then quieted himself by doubting whether it were a manly accomplishment. Rosina, after having with unusual benevolence, watered Hannah's flowers as well as her own, returned quite tired but in unexhausted spirits, to rest beneath the walnut-tree. The moon presently rose brightly from behind the hills, and Mrs. Wellford thought it time to return to the house. This movement was received by the gentlemen as a hint to wish good evening, which they accordingly did, after waiting to see the moon enter a fleecy cloud, and to make rival quotations from Milton, Byron, and Pope. The last "good-night" was said and smiled ; Lewis still lingered to utter *more last words* while Mr. Russell led the way up the lane and called Huntley's attention to the glow-worms sparkling on the banks.

"What an entertaining day this has been!" exclaimed Rosina, as she laid her head upon her pillow.

Lewis's opinion of it had not been very dissimilar. "What a smile Rosina Wellford has!" exclaimed he abruptly, after Huntley had quitted them. "She is so much altered since I last saw her that I should scarcely have known her again. As for her mind, that is altered too; however, I have watched its development in her letters—"

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Russell with surprise, "did you correspond?"

"No, no; her letters to Marianne, which I often saw, though without Rosina's guessing it. Why, they were living pictures? Not a corner of this village, not a creature who inhabits it, not a tea-party at Lady Worrall's, or a visit from you, Russell," added he laughing, "that was not recorded."

"I have often thought," said Mr. Russell rather gravely, "that Rosina was inclined to be satirical, but I did not imagine she allowed her liveliness to carry her these lengths."

"But not a word of ill-nature in them," interposed Lewis. "They were faultless in that respect; and the ardent affection they discovered towards her mother and sister, I have this evening seen displayed with my own eyes. I like the elder sister too; she reminds one of Milton's description of melancholy, though there is nothing melancholy about her. She seems

"devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure."

"Hannah's character deserves all those epithets except the last," said Mr. Russell, "which in common parlance stands for a sort of affected modesty, whereas hers is completely woven into her mind, and is too intrinsic to be worn as a mere ornament. Rosina has more natural vanity—"

"She has more to be vain of," observed Lewis.

"And often says, does, and fancies things," continued Mr. Russell, "which would never enter Hannah's imagination; but her innocence of mind and natural vivacity of disposition, form, I think, her best apologists; and as her experience and power of reflection increase, she will, if she has sufficient strength of mind to correct her little foibles, become a very enchanting character."

"I perfectly agree with you!" cried Lewis with energy; "yes, yes, she will, as you say, become an enchanting character; and I hate a perfect woman!"

CHAPTER XIII.

NUT CRACKING.

THIS had been a day of unusual excitement at the White Cottage; nor did it seem likely that events would very soon return to their former sleepy course. Huntley's picture and Lewis Pennington's arrival formed ample subject for conversation at Mrs. Wellford's breakfast table the ensuing morning; and before eleven o'clock, the artist came to request his sitters to resume their attitudes. Lewis soon arrived with his mother's letter, and was delighted to watch Huntley's progress; and in the course of the afternoon, Matthew and Sam Good looked in to inquire what was going on.

Matthew laughed heartily at what he called his sisters, masquerade dresses, and then entered into fluent conversation with Lewis Pennington, who pleased him exceedingly. Sam was meanwhile employed in asking Huntley a thousand absurd questions, and paying Rosina foolish compliments, at length the young men set out on their walk, and Lewis was with some difficulty persuaded by Matthew to accompany them.

The painting scheme completely interrupted the usual routine of feminine occupation. Mr. Russell and the Goods

were eager to look on and give their opinion, so that, for the first week, Mrs. Wellford's garden was a perpetual rendezvous, and Huntley found his progress greatly impeded by the admiration, criticism, and small talk of the by-standers. The charm of variety, however, he knew would soon cease, and then he should be left in comparative quiet. Till that coveted period arrived, he postponed the luxury of painting Hannah's portrait, and occupied himself with his study of Rosina. This flattered her imagination, and awoke both the interest and jealousy of Lewis, who at first was angry with him for not doing justice to her prettiness, and then, for dwelling, as he fancied, enamoured on her features.

Lewis Pennington's character was not such as one sees every day. His disposition was ardently affectionate, his imagination lively, and his mind tinctured with a spice of romance, which, united to manners of boyish gaiety and sincerity, was rather apt to make the sedate and cautious give him less credit for strength of judgment and principle than he really deserved, while it remarkably endeared him to those by whom he was intimately known. To hint that he came to Summerfield *on purpose* to fall in love with Rosina Wellford, would ruin my hero irreparably in the opinion of his judges, although such a *result* might appear the natural and proper consequence of his visit. The motives which had actuated him, however, were thoroughly characteristic of himself.

Rosina's childish beauty had had as little effect as might have been expected on his boyish imagination; but in after years, his parents' partial reminiscences of her, and the snatches of her clever letters which Marianne occasionally read aloud for the Doctor's amusement, kept alive his remembrance of her, and excited some degree of curiosity to know whether this lively and secluded young beauty were all that his imagination pictured. Summerfield was thought of by Lewis as a little nest of loveliness, where the trees were greener and the air sweeter than any where else; and he could not help considering himself the originator of the happiness which breathed throughout Rosina's letters, since he it was he who had contrived the scheme of her elopement from Park-Place, an achievement, which, in spite of the disgrace it had entailed on himself, he always remembered with amazing satisfaction. He resolved that if he should ever make a tour through the western counties of England, he would take Summerfield in his way; and on quitting college, idleness soon gave a substantial form to the plan which had once or twice floated

through his brain. He told his father he should like to unbend his mind and recruit his health by a little excursion through some of the neighbouring counties, and that he thought he might as well begin by spending a week or ten days with that honest fellow, Russell. Dr. Pennington looked at his blithe, arch countenance and elastic figure, and could see no ravages made either by sickness or over-study; however, he had no objection to the boy's having a little change, and was well convinced he could learn no harm of Mr. Russell. So, on a good horse, and with a fifty pound note in his pocket, Lewis started for Summerfield.

Here he found himself so exceedingly comfortable, that he thought, for the present, the western counties might take care of themselves. Mr. Russell was a most hospitable host, with enough love of humour to relish all Lewis's pleasantries, and of indulgence to sympathize in much of his romance. Their breakfasts and dinners were discussed with the utmost harmony: for the rest of the day, Mr. Russell was quite as much at liberty as ever, to write in his study or visit his parishioners; for Lewis either rode about the country or lounged the sultry hours away at Mrs. Welford's. Here he was always sure of smiles, and a little coquetry into the bargain.

Rosina could not be prevailed on to acknowledge the contents of the postscript which she had torn off Marianne Pennington's letter before she gave it to her mother and sister. That it contained some laughing innuendo concerning Lewis was rendered as probable from her confusion as from the enthusiasm and romance which made Marianne so closely resemble her brother. If Marianne, however, had possessed as much judgment as kindness, she would have left the postscript unwritten; since Rosina, induced by it to fancy Lewis a lover from the outset, shrank from his advances with a feeling of consciousness, which not even her inclination to coquetry could overcome. Her vanity made her undoubtful of the effect of her charms; her modesty made her shrink, even while she longed for admiration, from the language of love; and thus, there were as many pretty blushings, and starts, and retreats, and trepidations, as a mischievous bystander could desire for amusement. Lewis was puzzled, attracted, and deceived; he became interested in the pursuit, and little doubtful of success. Yet he was not without his vexations.

He was at first uncommonly charmed with the daily sittings under the walnut-tree, which afforded such opportunity for pleasant idling, and looking to and fro between the picture

and Rosina ; but he soon began to discover that these regular proceedings were monotonous and tiresome, and preventive of pleasant tête-à-tête rambles through the green lanes ; while, if he contented himself with escorting the ladies in their evening walk, and took a ride in the interim, he thereby left the field occupied by a rival whose genius sadly balanced against his own good looks. This conviction, when it first broke upon him, was mortifying. That Huntley, his inferior in station, fortune, and education, perhaps also in character, three inches shorter, and a mere painter to boot, should actually be his rival ! Lewis's contempt for him seemed in a fair way of changing into dislike. He was pacified, however, by thinking that the picture would soon be finished, and the artist recalled by his business to London. Vain thought ! Huntley, with the whole summer before him, and a picture in hand to which he was resolved to give the nicest finish, was in no hurry to depart ; and as living at an inn was too expensive, he engaged a lodging at a little cottage in the valley, where he might remain all the autumn if he were so minded.

Thus settled at his ease, he pursued his occupation in the most leisurely manner imaginable, touching and retouching Orpah's face and figure till they possessed the finish of a miniature ; apparently, as it seemed to Lewis, for the purpose of tiring him out, and remaining victor by his mere tenacity of the ground. As Lewis had no tolerable pretence for remaining at Summerfield longer than a fortnight or three weeks, this plan seemed beyond the patience of a mortal to bear ; and he devoutly wished he could find some London acquaintance who had a pretence for taking out a writ of *habeas corpus* against the indefatigable artist.

If Lewis were thus alternately lapped in Elisium by Rosina's blushes, and chafed by her preference of his rival, Huntley was happier than he had ever been in his life, though not from the cause which Mr. Pennington suspected. He was engaged on a picture which pleased him ; he was daily in the enjoyment of refined and pleasant society ; he was shone on by the smiles of beauty, and had hourly opportunities of improving his acquaintance with the charms of Hannah's mind, while the delight of finishing her portrait was yet in store. He was now on speaking terms with every one in Summerfield : the Wellfords pleased him most ; but he also liked Mr. Russell, Lewis Pennington, and Mr. and Mrs. Good ; while partiality threw a halo round

the other inhabitants of the village who had less to recommend them.

On the first Sunday which Lewis spent at Summerfield, Huntley strolled, after morning service, along the banks of the little river which wound through the valley. It was a hot day in August; and the willows and ashes which hung over the stream, formed a pleasant shade. Huntley fell into reverie, and the subject of his thoughts was Hannah. He felt that he loved her from the bottom of his heart, and that the beauty which had at first attracted him, was enhanced by the loveliness of feminine virtues which no splendour of intellect or fashion could excel. While he dwelt on the gradually unfolded charms of her character, with unalloyed pleasure, the doubt occurred to him that possibly all his own endeavours to excite attachment might be ineffectual. Huntley was not without the pride of intellect, but he was not vain. He gave his personal recommendations no undue preponderance in the scale; and felt that Hannah must be conquered by the power of mind. While pursuing the same chain of thought, and debating whether he could really afford to marry, he threw himself on the ground, beneath the shade of a little clump of trees. Scarcely was he seated, when his ears were saluted by a tapping sound, not unlike that of a woodpecker; soon after some one coughed, and then sneezed; and looking round, Huntley perceived Sam Good seated at a little distance, cracking nuts.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Huntley?" said Sam, with the ease of an old acquaintance, edging himself nearer as he spoke: "I saw you in church this morning."

"Did you," said Huntley, *not* interrogatively.

"Yes; this is a fine day, is n't it?"

"Very," replied Huntley.

"But very hot. How hot it was in church to be sure! You and I have picked out a nice cool place."

"I am hardly satisfied with it," said Huntley, "I think I shall soon be moving."

"You won't better yourself if you do. How goes on your picture? Ah, Mr. Huntley! you have a lovely subject."

"Yes, I think I have," said Huntley, growing more interested in the dialogue.

"Sweet!" said Sam, cracking a nut. "Will you have some filberts? They're hardly ripe, though. Oh, I envy you, I assure you. She's a pretty little thing, Rosina."

"Oh," said Huntley with mortification, "I thought you were speaking of Miss Wellford."

"Hannah; no. Rosina for my money. Such a peachy kind of complexion, such a dimple, and such eyes."

"Yes," said Huntley, "Miss Rosina Wellford is exceedingly pretty, but her sister is by far the more beautiful girl."

"Rather an old girl, I think," said Sam.

"Old!" cried Huntley, looking as if he could have knocked him down.

"Yes, old," repeated the pert little articed clerk, "she looked as womanly as she does now when I was leaving school, and was a tall girl paying visits with her mother when I used to run about in pinafores. I'm sure she can't be far from three and twenty; and that for a girl I call old."

Sam, finding he had all the conversation to himself, soon afterwards walked off; and Huntley remained throwing stones into the water; and pondering on a young girl growing up in beauty without its being seen and admired by any one—without even dreaming, herself, of her own exceeding fairness. There was something which interested his fancy in the speculation. He wondered at Sam's audacity in calling Hannah by her Christian name. It was a privilege he had envied Mr. Russell; but then, Mr. Russell had known her from a child, and was almost old enough to be her father; at any rate her uncle. Sam Good's impertinence was unbearable!

CHAPTER XIV.

SUSPICIOUS APPEARANCES.

"WELL, how go on affairs in general, Rosy?" said Matthew, one afternoon as he opened the garden gate.

"Affairs in general," repeated she, laughing, "that is just like Sam Good. Come and see."

She led him towards Mr. Huntley's picture.

"Oh capital! Upon my word, Mr. Huntley is quite a—what shall I say? A second Apelles. Only don't fancy, Rosy, that you are half so handsome as your picture."

"To be sure I shall not," said she, removing his saucy

fingers from her chin. "But I wish you would leave off calling me Rosy. Lewis Pennington does it, and I don't like it at all."

"By the by, where is Lewis? I thought I should find him here."

"He is riding somewhere, I suppose—I cannot presume to say where."

"Can't you? I should have thought *you* would have known at any rate. What a fine, spirited, open-hearted fellow he is!"

"So I think, Matthew," said his mother; "I am glad you seem to like each other."

"I am glad you think he likes *me*," said Matthew.

"Dear! why should he not?" cried Rosina, "Lewis Pennington need not be fastidious."

"No man had *better* be fastidious, but if any one has a right to be so, surely Lewis has."

"I do not know why. He is not particularly clever."

"Not deficient, either, Rosina, and particularly pleasing, at any rate."

"He never says any thing very brilliant."

"Oh, as to that, how few people do! The most agreeable companions are not those who are always striving to shine. Indeed the very effort has something disagreeable in it."

"Ah, Matthew, but clever people can be brilliant *without* effort."

"How long is Lewis going to stay there?" said Matthew, taking hold of one of Rosina's ringlets.

"How should I know? How should we know?" said she quickly.

Matthew examined the picture for a few minutes, and then suddenly exclaimed, "I can tell you a piece of news if you like to hear it."

"What is it?" inquired Hannah.

"Guess," returned he.

"What a tiresome way that is of answering!" cried Rosina; "just like Mr. Russell."

"Why, Rosy," said Matthew good-humouredly, "first you accuse me of imitating Sam Good, next Lewis Pennington, and next, Mr. Russell. To hear you talk, one would think I picked up all the cast-off bad habits of the parish. Have I learnt any thing of Huntley? Hey?"

She blushed and said, "Well, whom does your news relate to?"

"None of the present company," said Matthew.

"Sam Good?"

"No."

"The Miss Hinckleys of Hundleford, then. I suppose one of them is going to be married."

"You girls must always be thinking of weddings," said Matthew. "Oh, you are quite out. It is nothing so serious as matrimony. Mrs. Shivers has returned to the Pleasance!"

"Is that all?"

"All! You would have thought a great deal of it a month ago; but lately, these paintings and visitings have made you so dissipated that you can't be surprised at any thing only a little out of the common. Yes, she has come back from the continent at last; and Mr. Good was sent for, this morning, to attend the housekeeper; but as it is *only* the housekeeper, I dare say I shall go to the Pleasance to-morrow. Don't you envy me?"

"Envy you? No; why should I?"

"You have often said you should like to see the house and grounds."

"Oh!—yes; but not in that kind of way."

"*That* kind of way! Let me tell you, Miss Rosy, there is nothing disreputable in *that* kind of way, as you call it. A medical man is on equal terms with his patients—"

"But your patient is *only* a housekeeper."

"But Mr. Good saw Mrs. Shivers herself, and lunched with her into the bargain. Don't be high and mighty, Rosy,—Rosina, I mean! You had not these fine airs till lately. And what right have *we* to fine airs, any of us?"

"Excellent, Matthew," said his mother with a smile.

Circumstances seemed to conspire unfortunately against the success of Lewis's wooing. Rosina's fancy, and as she believed, her heart, were completely pre-occupied by his rival: she made frequent comparisons between them, and Huntley's genius and accomplishments always bore the palm. Even the *bonhomie* and guilelessness of heart which formed the greatest charm of Lewis's character, were against him under present circumstances, since they were completely opposed to the austere grace and mysterious dignity which she considered could alone atone in a hero for the absence of the fire of genius. His wit only amounted to pleasantries, and he rarely affected sentiment, even for her sake. To amuse and

be amused seemed with him a greater object than to shine: his partiality for her was too openly and boyishly expressed; and to sum up his delinquencies, he had now and then, when tempted by a little extra kindness, ventured to call her Rosy! How was it possible to endure such an ignominious abbreviation, even from a second-cousin? or to believe that the person who voluntarily so addressed his mistress, could have a spark of chivalrous or impassioned feeling in his composition? Instead of exalting her into a goddess, it was dragging her down to the level of a milkmaid! Rosina was even perverse enough to be secretly angry that Lewis should be better looking than Mr. Huntley, and she would never allow the fact to her mother and sister, saying that they might seek in vain for Huntley's genius in Lewis's eyes. Indeed her conversation had generally so much direct or indirect reference to Huntley, that this very circumstance might have taught her that hers was not the sweet silent passion of the heart, but merely a feverish dream of the imagination. Hannah was well persuaded of it, and was even convinced that Huntley's admiration of her sister had little depth, though she was unaware of the stronger feeling which she had herself excited. Mrs. Wellford and the young painter were almost the only persons who had not penetrated or guessed what Rosina fancied the secret of her heart. From the latter she had skill and delicacy enough to enable her successfully to conceal it; and of her mother she was sufficiently afraid to beware of laying herself open to raillery and reproof. Mr. Russell was much more aware of all that was going on than she suspected; and Lewis whose vision was sharpened by jealousy, saw a good deal both of what did and what did not exist. In the first place, he was puzzled to decide whether Rosina's conduct sprang from coquetry, from unconsciousness of his attachment, or from actual preference of his rival; but the conduct of that rival appeared much less doubtful. The intensity of expression in Huntley's eyes when he looked at Hannah, and the softness of his voice in addressing her, convinced Lewis that much more was here than simple politeness, and he believed that Huntley was playing a double part towards the sisters. Of this, Huntley was indeed guiltless; but appearances were against him, and as it was impossible he should marry both, Lewis believed he was only trifling with either, and boiled with indignation at the thought. His suspicions were also awakened in another quarter. When we have looked long on a bright object, every thing else seems,

to our dazzled eyes, to wear the same hue. Lewis began by considering what an ~~excellent~~ match might he made between his two favourites, Mr. Russell and Hannah, and arguing on rather unsubstantial premises, he at length persuaded himself that the gentleman, at least, was not indifferent; and in fact, deeply though secretly in love. Lewis could find no more work for the blind god in Summerfield: to think of Matthew and Phœbe Holland was too ridiculous.

CHAPTER XV.

CIVIL IMPERTINENCES.

Mrs. Good gave a tea party. The Greenways and Mrs. Wellford were invited to make up a whist table for Lady Worral; and the young Wellfords, the Miss Hollands, Mr. Russell, Mr. Huntley, and Lewis Pennington were free to amuse themselves as they pleased with music or conversation. Huntley was cut off from Hannah, by Mrs. Good, Miss Holland, and Mr. Russell, who formed a sociable little knot at one of the open windows; therefore, *au dernier ressort*, he played the agreeable to Rosina.

"Did you ever try the 'Sortes Virgilianæ?'" said he, "Suppose we try our fortune."

He opened a book at hazard. The first sentence that met his eye was "A woman, who, from a sloven, becomes neat, or from being neat, becomes a sloven, is assuredly in love."

"Aha, ladies! who does that apply to?" said Matthew, looking round.

"Not to me, I am sure," said Rosina, meeting his eye surely, "I never was a sloven."

"Oh! nor I," cried Miss Phœbe Holland; "I would not be a sloven for all the world."

"Well, we will try again," said Huntley, taking up another book—"perhaps the next random shot may hit some of us more closely. The next shall be for me:

"Ah me, they little know
Under what torments inwardly I groan!"

Huntley raised his eyes, hoping to meet those of Hannah, but unfortunately they encountered Rosina.

"Try for me," said Lewis impatiently.

Huntley re-opened the Milton, and read:—

"My sentence is for open war: of wiles,
More inexpert I boast not."

"I hope that does not hit," said Huntley laughing.

Not very far from the mark, however, thought Lewis.

"I will dip again for you," continued Huntley. "This time it shall be into Shakspeare:—There are none of my uncle's marks upon you; he taught me how to know a man in love, in which cage of rushes, I am sure you are not prisoner—his marks were, a lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not; and a beard neglected, which you have not."

Rosina smiled ironically. "And here is another for somebody," cried Matthew, reading over Huntley's shoulder—"By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found *you*!"

"Thank you," said Huntley good-humouredly.

"Gently, Matthew," said Lewis Pennington, "remember it is playing with edged tools."

"Yes, but the joke is," returned Matthew, "that nobody must complain if they cut their fingers."

"Dear! I think it is very entertaining," said Miss Phœbe. "Do let me try." She took up a book and read, with amusing emphasis,

"Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke."

"Who is our duke?" inquired she, looking round with an air of perplexity. Nobody could tell her; and Matthew began to laugh.

"That is a very stupid one," said Phœbe, with disappointment. She made two or three other attempts, but they were equally unfortunate.

"Well, I cannot think how you do it," said she laying down the book.

"All chance, ma'am," said Huntley.

"I think," said little Fanny Good, who had been a silent but not unobserving bystander, "that Mr. Huntley does not always read *quite* the first words he sees, but that he looks down the page, and that if he sees any thing like anybody, he——"

"Oh, hush, Fanny, hush," said Matthew, laughing heartily and drawing her away.

"Oh, do let me go, Matthew," said she, struggling, "and I won't say any thing again."

"What do you think of *this*, Rosina?" said Lewis, in a low voice, pointing to a line in one of Madame de Genlis's works, which he was not malicious enough to read aloud—

"*Une coquette se fait un jeu cruel d'inspirer des sentiments qu'elle est décidée à ne partager jamais.*"

"Well!" said Rosina, hardly, though she coloured at the application. Lewis looked at her and seeing nothing to hope for in her countenance, sighed and turned away. "Pray dip for me, Mr. Huntley!" cried she with assumed eagerness. "You promised you would dip for me, and you have not done so yet."

"Dip! ay, dive, if you will," replied he, "into the depths of the ocean!"

"That would be rather too cruel of me to exact."

"And do not you love cruelty?" said he expressively. Rosina little thought that he was alluding to Lewis.

"Come, here is something about Rosaline. That may stand for Rosina, may not it?"

"Who sees the heavenly Rosaline
That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,
At the first opening of the gorgeous east,
Bows not his vassal head, and stricken blind
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?"

Rosina laughed. "Oh, pray dip for *me*, Mr. Huntley!" cried Miss Phœbe.

"Certainly," he replied, again opening Milton.

"But who is this, what thing of sea or land,
That—"

Oh this won't do at all," cried he.

"Yes, yes, pray go on!" implored Miss, Phœbe. Huntley resumed—

"Who is this,
That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing, like a steady ship
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled and streamers waving?"

"Dear! I'm sure I am not like a ship," said Phœbe, glancing at her canary lutestring.

"No, not the least in the world! I told you it was quite mal-à-propos," said Huntley, turning from her, and exchanging an arch look with Rosina.

"What game have you there, ladies and gentlemen, which seems to entertain you so much?" said Mrs. Good,

"Sortes Virgilianæ, they call it," said Miss Phœbe, approaching her with a rather dissatisfied air. "It is very entertaining, a little of it, but one gets tired of it in time."

"Will you favour us with a little music then?" said Mrs. Good, rising to open the piano. Matthew hastened to save her the trouble, and having launched Miss Phœbe into a solo, returned to Lewis.

"I agree with Miss Phœbe," said Lewis in a low voice, glancing at the same time towards Rosina and Huntley, who were deep in flirtation, "that one may push Sortes Virgilianæ a little too far. Mr. Huntley has, under their protection, insulted or flattered almost every one of the party."

"And did not *you* take advantage of them to push Rosy rather hard?" inquired Matthew. "I saw her blush pretty deeply."

The little party at the window being now broken up, Hannah and Mr. Russell approached the table.

"So you have been playing at Sortes Virgilianæ," said Mr. Russell. "Had you any clever hits?"

"Some rather hard hits," said Matthew; "they that play at bowls,—you know the rest."

Mr. Russell looked up from the book he had casually opened, struck by some rather daring speech of Huntley's. He glanced across the table; saw Rosina, brilliant in beauty and reckless spirits; Huntley, whose back was towards him, rattling on with great animation and obvious encouragement; and Lewis biting his lip as he silently turned over a portfolio of prints. He looked down again on his book, but it was absently, and he caught most of the conversation. Miss Phœbe coming to the end of her '*air variée*,' Huntley's and Rosina's voices were *sans* accompaniment, and the flirtation paused in mid career. Mrs. Good now asked Rosina to play. She required rather more pressing than usual, but at length placed herself at the piano. She began one of Lewis's favourite songs. Mr. Russell could not help being amused by Lewis's movements. First, he started at hearing the well-known symphony, but continued turning over the

prints—then he paused with his eyes immovably fixed on the engraving before him, but evidently not thinking of it; then he hastily looked round, but encountering a side view of Huntley, resumed his original position; still however, intently listening: at length, when the second verse commenced, with a line of which he particularly admired the sentiment, Lewis arose, pushed away the prints, and in another moment, was leaning over the piano.

“‘Sweet Helen’ has conquered!” thought Mr. Russell; and he turned to see if Hannah had been observing the little scene; but she was speaking to Fanny Good. Fanny was called away, and Mr. Russell approached Hannah with a book in his hand.

“I have been trying,” said he, “*my* luck at the Sortes, but I have not opened yet, on a single applicable passage. Let me make one more attempt, and if that is unsuccessful, I shall give it up in despair.”

He opened at hazard, and began to read. A smile stole over his countenance. “This is pretty, is not it?” said he; and sitting down by Hannah, he read in an under tone the following passage.

“‘Happiness is the natural design of all the world; and every thing we see done is in order to attain it. My imagination places it in friendship. By friendship, I mean an entire communication of thoughts, wishes, interests, and pleasures, being undivided: a mutual esteem, which naturally carries with it a pleasing sweetness of conversation, and terminates in the desire of making one another happy, without being forced to run into visits, noise, and hurry, which serve rather to trouble than compose the thoughts of any reasonable creature. I take you to have sense enough not to think this romantic.’”

“What do you think of it?” said he.

“I think that it *is* romantic,” said Hannah smiling, “but very beautiful, and not impossible.”

“Do you think it not impossible, merely from judging of your own mind, or from any example you have observed in the conduct of others?”

Hannah considered, and replied, “From both. My own feelings make me believe that I could be happy in the cultivation of such a friendship; and I also think that a friendship such as you have described *does* exist, between my mother and myself.”

Mr. Russell's dark eyes said very flattering things at that moment, if Hannah could but have translated their meaning.

"But Hannah," said he, "the friendship spoken of in this book is supposed to exist between persons of different sexes."

"In that case," said Hannah, slightly blushing, "would not the feeling be called love?"

Matthew here interrupted them by offering a plate of sandwiches. There had been a little stir going on in the room for some time, on account of the arrival of Lady Worrall's carriage, and the supper having consequently to be hurried. Her ladyship never gave suppers, and was angry with those who did; she therefore cast an evil eye on the cakes, jellies, and blanc-manges which Mrs. Good's hospitality had provided, and which the servants in their haste had set in wrong places, declaring she would not touch one of them, yet nevertheless tasting every thing Mr. Good put upon her plate. She was duly cloaked, handed out, and bowed away; and then Mr. Good, declaring he had no notion of letting the old lady break up the party, went his rounds with the various good things, which he pressed every one to taste. The young men followed his example, and Lewis and Huntley, each bringing Rosina some trifle, nearly broke a plate between them in trying which should be first.

"I was the commissioned," said Huntley, laughing.

"And I had the merit of guessing the lady's wishes before they were named," said Lewis.

"How silly to dispute about a trifle!" cried Rosina. "Lewis came first, therefore I *command* you, Mr. Huntley, to eat what you have brought yourself."

"Oh, that all ladies' commands could be as pleasantly obeyed!" he exclaimed.

"That is a double entendre," said Matthew; "do you mean that the peculiarity of the pleasure exists in obeying the lady, or eating the trifle?"

"What a question for a gentleman to answer!" returned Huntley.

"Gentleman!" said Lewis to himself. "He is but a painter. Perhaps if he *were* a gentleman, I might make him either answer *it* or answer *for* it."

"Lewis, will you be so kind as to give me a glass of water?" said Hannah, who saw that something had vexed him.

"With pleasure," said he, starting at the sound of her gentle voice—"will you not let me put a little wine in it?"

"None, I thank you."

"If you were any one but Miss Hannah Wellford," returned he smiling. "I should accuse you of having covertly reprimanded my negligence in not having asked you to take wine with me."

"But, as I *am* Miss Hannah Wellford," replied she, "you will, I hope, give me credit for not meaning to affront, even when appearances are against me—and perhaps" (in rather a lower tone,) "you will extend your credit to others also."

"I wish all others were as single-hearted," said he quitting her to fulfil her request.

At the same moment, Rosina said, "Here Mr. Huntley; as Mr. Pennington brought me the plate, I shall insist on your replacing it on the table."

"How evenly you hold the balances between your slaves!"

"What is that about slaves?" cried Mr. Russell. "Are you discussing the slave-trade, Mr. Huntley? There is a curious paragraph on it in this paper."

Huntley caught in the trap, was forced to glance over the paragraph; and before he laid down the newspaper, he perceived some intelligence which made him forget Rosina, and enter into conversation with Mr. Good and Mr. Russell. The party now broke up, and Huntley's lodgings lying in the same way as Mrs. Wellford's cottage he accompanied them to the gate, walking at the side of Mrs. Wellford, while the girls, arm in arm, followed closely behind.

Lewis lighted his bed candle the moment he entered the vicarage parlour. "Good night, Mr. Russell," said he.

"Good night, Lewis. I hope you have had a pleasant evening."

"Very!" replied Lewis with strong emphasis. "Milton might well call woman a 'cleaving mischief!'"

"Come, come, Lewis," said Mr. Russell, "don't go to your pillow in wrath. The fault was not all the lady's."

"Huntley led her on you mean! Consummate puppy! If —"

"No *ifs*, Lewis, just yet," interrupted his friend playfully — "I did not mean Huntley; I was thinking of yourself."

"I! what have I done —"

"I will tell you. You have by your attention and flattery turned the head of a very lively, inexperienced young girl, already too prone to vanity. Her heart has had no time to imbibe any depth of feeling; she is proud of her power over you and —"

" Huntley has it all to answer for ; not I," said Lewis— " but why should I be surprised ? All women are more or less coquettes."

" Now, you are falling into the vulgar error, my honest friend, and prefer laying the fault of an individual on the whole sex, to confessing that individual to be less perfect than many others. Nay, you are doing Rosina injustice in calling her a coquette, though I own, her conduct to night deserved the epithet of coquetry. But many circumstances, and your ill-concealed vexation among the rest, conspired to make her act recklessly and foolishly. Perhaps even by this time, she may be sorry for her levity. Endeavour to judge of her less like a lover, and more like a reasonable being, if possible ; and neither exact super-feminine perfection, nor degrade your goddess into a flirt—the most contemptible character to be found among the sex."

Lewis sighed, and repeated his good-night.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DAY OF PLEASURE.

THE following day was Sunday. Lewis, the son of a rector and the guest of a vicar, had no intention of awaking feelings at variance with the duties of the day, by calling at the White Cottage ; and, far from cherishing sentiments of enmity towards Rosina, he felt more kindly as he knelt by her side and repeated the same prayers.

Who can be angry on a Sabbath ? Not those who after a week of trouble and toil, wake to a consciousness that the ringing of the anvil has ceased, that the flail lies silent on the threshing-floor, that the husbandman and the manufacturer taste of the strange thing, leisure, and that the bell is summoning rich and poor to learn the same duties and crave the same blessings in the temple of God. Not those who feel that whatever bad passions they foster six days in the week, pride should be reined in and contention hushed while the air around them is yet musical with admonitions to love and peace, and with the mingled orisons of assembled multitudes. Not those who, if they ever pause and think, in the midst of

dissipation's feverish career, it is on that day when the laws of this country cause places of public amusement to be closed and commerce to stand still, that the small voice of conscience and the gayer cry of nature may for a few short hours be heard.

Afternoon service was just beginning, when the unusual sound of carriage wheels was heard without; and shortly after, a very pretty woman in a very pretty bonnet, entered the church, and advanced towards the vicar's ample pew. This, as Mr. Russell had no occasion for its use, had continued to be occupied by the Wellfords, who now with silent smiles made room for the unexpected visitant. This lady was Mrs. Shivers of the Pleasance. Her country-seat stood in the adjoining parish, but she was in the habit of coming once or twice in the course of the summer, to hear Mr. Russell's afternoon sermon. Only a sort of bowing acquaintance had hitherto existed between her and the Wellfords: on the present occasion, however, Mrs. Shivers was disposed to be very friendly and gracious. During the two years she had spent on the continent, Matthew and Rosina had grown from mere boy and girl, into very prepossessing looking young people; and she had heard enough of Mrs. Wellford and Hannah from Mr. Russell to make her resolve to improve their acquaintance on the first opportunity. No sooner, therefore, had the service ended than she shook hands all round, mistaking Lewis for Matthew, and Matthew for his younger brother Harry: (no wonder she was surprised at his growth!) and the mistake was not thoroughly explained till they reached the churchyard. *Then*, she laughed at her own blindness, wondered she should have fancied a likeness where there was no relationship, was corrected in that particular, and finally invited the whole family to spend a long day at the Pleasance. Mrs. Wellford excused herself on plea of the distance, but Mrs. Shivers, increasing in earnestness in proportion to the difficulties started, would take no refusal, and offered to send her poney-carriage for them on the following day, if they had no other engagement. She smiled so winningly that it was impossible to refuse: Mr. Russell and Lewis were included in the invitation, and the lady drove off, after making captive at least half a dozen hearts.

"Charming woman!" exclaimed Rosina warmly, as they walked home. "How completely her manners are removed from hauteur and affectation, while it is impossible not to feel that they are those of high breeding!"

"The best of it is," said Mrs. Wellford, "that it is not mere manner which fascinates us in Mrs. Shivers, but real kindness of heart. Mr. Russell tells me he knows of no one possessed of more genuine excellence of disposition. It is true she is fond of the gaieties of a London spring; and, formed as she is to give and receive pleasure in society, who can wonder at it? Enough of the summer, autumn, and winter still remains for her to have much leisure for self-improvement, and for doing a great deal of good among her poorer neighbours."

"Exactly the sort of woman I should like to be, and the sort of life I should like to lead!" said Rosina. "With such good looks, such resources, and such a fortune, a woman of her age may be quite as happy, I should think, as in the bloom of youth."

"Who can doubt it?" said Hannah.

"No one so sage as you are, of course," returned Rosina, laughing; "but I, for one have always wished '*le printemps de la vie*' could be perpetual."

"A very foolish wish, my dear," observed Mrs. Wellford. "Happiness depends on the moderation and gratification of our desires, not on the number of years we have told."

"But suppose, mamma, those desires should be for a continuance of youth, beauty, and admiration?"

"Then, Rosina, I shculd say the person that had formed them was very weak; and as much an object of contempt as pity."

"Very likely; but still that does not prove that the 'dark brown years' are naturally as happy as those of youth."

"You just now said," interposed Hannah, "that you thought a woman of Mrs. Shivers's age might be quite as happy as in the spring of life."

"Ay, but how few Mrs. Shiverses there are! and even she in another ten or fifteen years will no longer be enviable. If her sight fails, what will become of her reading? if she grows deaf, what pleasure can she take in society? or, if rheumatic, what will become of her charming rides in her poney phæton?"

"Even with all these calamities attendant on old age," said Hannah, "she may yet be happy. There is a passage which struck me last night—"

"What! at Mrs. Good's?"

"Yes, in one of the books which had been used for the Sot-tes Virgilianæ. It was in one of Lady Mary Wortley Monta-

gu's letters, concerning the comforts peculiar to old age. I cannot repeat it to you word for word, but I will shew it to you when we reach home."

Hannah remembered her promise, and looked out the passage. "You must consider," said she, "that Lady Mary was nearly seventy years of age when she wrote this letter, in a foreign country, removed from all her family, and almost wholly prevented by weak sight from reading: in her youth she had been a wit, beauty, and coquette; few, therefore, could have had a better opportunity of comparing feverish exciting pleasures with those of monotonous tranquillity; yet what does she say? 'It was formerly a terrifying view to me that I should one day be an old woman. I now find that nature has provided pleasures for every state. Those alone are unhappy who will not be contented with what she gives; but strive to break through her laws, by affecting a perpetuity of youth; which appears to me as little desirable at present as the dolls do to you, that they were the delight of your infancy.' She was happy, you see; yet she had no very lively feelings of religion. She does not say that 'God has provided,' but that '*nature* has provided pleasures for every state.' If such content and satisfaction are the result of mere philosophy, what would be the increased happiness of a woman of religion, one who could look back, not on a youth of frivolity and vanity, but of well-sustained trial?"

"Very well argued indeed!" said Rosina. "Certainly, Hannah, you are cut out for a parson's wife. What an excellent helpmate you would be to darling Mr. Russell! You would not only make his puddings, but make his sermons."

Hannah did not lose her composure, nor even blush at this sarcasm. "I have no ambition to fill the post you have assigned me," said she, "nor do I think my interference would be wanted either in Mary White's puddings or Mr. Russell's sermons."

"Perhaps not," returned Rosina, "but remember, after all, Hannah, the old age you have been describing is that of a wife or widow; not even you can soften the dismal fate of an old maid."

"Nay," said Hannah, "try the passage I have been reading in another way. 'It was formerly a terrifying view to me that I should one day be an *old maid*. I now find that nature has provided pleasures for every state—' It reads quite as well."

"Ay, but it has never been written; it is no result of ex-

perience," said Rosina. "Oh, my dear! the old age of a single woman must be very forlorn."

"Why so?" said Hannah. "Unless she has outlived all her friends, which, I grant, must be melancholy enough in any state, she has the connections of her youth who have grown old with her, the same useful and innocent pursuits, and the same religious consolations."

"Ah, but my dear Hannah, the ridicule!—"

"For what? Do women always marry sensible men?"

"Oh, certainly not."

"What honour is there, then, in the addresses of a fool? Surely the woman who accepts a weak, worthless man, merely to avoid the name of an old maid, is more ridiculous than one to whom only the negative stigma attaches, of never having had an offer. Is *that* the indispensable requisite? Ladies would do well, then, to pin a list of their conquered knights on their sleeve. But I did not know that the diamond of which dozens of idlers have inquired the price, was more valuable than those shut up in the jewellers' drawer, or sleeping in their mine."

"My dear Hannah," exclaimed Rosina with sudden energy, "I am certain that if you should have the misfortune to be an old maid, you will be the best that ever lived!"

Hannah smiled, but sat down to read without replying.

The following morning was as fine as Hannah had hoped and Rosina anticipated. In preparing to visit so stylish a lady as Mrs. Shivers, even Hannah was obliged to devote twice as much time as usual to the cares of the toilette. Mr. Huntley was consequently disappointed of his sitters, for Rosina could scarcely spare time to run down stairs to make their excuses. "Poor Mr. Huntley!" cried she as she was returning to the bed-room where Hannah was unfolding muslins and ribbons, "he looked so disappointed! What a thousand pities he is not going to the Pleasance!"

"Nay, it will be too ridiculous of you, Rosina," said Hannah, "if you spoil your day's pleasure by regretting the absence of a person you see at least once in every twenty-four hours."

"Who would have thought of the philosophic Hannah's quoting ridicule as an evil to be avoided?" said Rosina with some pique.

"You dread it so much sometimes," said Hannah, "that I thought I could urge nothing more likely to frighten you into common sense."

"And do you really think, my dear Hannah, I am so very deficient in common sense?"

"I think you now and then discover *uncommon* sense," said Hannah playfully.

"Hark! there is Matthew calling to us beneath the window," said Rosina, running to the casement.

"Will some of you come down?" cried he.

"We cannot, Matthew, we are dressing. Wait a little while."

"I cannot wait," he replied, "I have run down the lane to tell you I shall not be able to go with you to Mrs. Shivers's. Old Kippis has sent over, express, for Mr. Good, so I can't be spared."

"Oh, Matthew! What a disappointment."

"Yes, it is a disappointment; however, I am going in the first place to Hundleford. *That*, you know, will make some amends," added he laughing. "Where is Hannah? I know *she* can't have her hair in curl papers. Oh, there you are, Hannah. Good by; give my love to my mother. Rosina looks quite like a Juliet; it is a pity Lewis is not here to play Romeo. I am glad you have such a cool day."

Matthew kissed his hand and ran off.

Exact to the time appointed, Mrs. Shivers's carriage arrived, and, to the ladies' praise be it spoken, it was not kept waiting. The five miles' drive was extremely pretty; and Rosina was enchanted with the scenery, the weather, and the easy motion of the phæton. A neat lodge-gate admitted them into Mrs. Shivers's grounds, and after passing through a winding plantation, they found themselves at the Pleasance.

The house was such a mixture of all styles, that it was difficult to say whether castle, cottage, or villa predominated. No one would ever have designed a *whole*, such as it now stood, and it was evident that each improver had run up his own portion of the edifice with more regard to his own peculiar taste than to what already displayed that of his predecessor: time had thrown its mellowing hue over all, and a variety of creeping plants connecting battlement, balcony, and ballustrade, beautified what was seen, and hid what was incongruous.

In a small Gothic hall lighted with coloured glass, Mrs. Shivers was waiting to receive her guests, accompanied by a pleasing young lady whom she introduced as her niece, Miss Pakenham. After bonnets and shawls had been laid aside

and preliminary subjects discussed, Mrs. Shivers proposed a walk through the conservatory, saying she thought it would be pleasanter to go over the grounds in the cool of the evening.

"Are you fond of flowers?" asked Miss Pakenham of Rosina, as they proceeded towards the conservatory.

"Yes," said Rosina, "but Hannah is much the best botanist."

"Perhaps you are like me, and think it pleasanter to smell and look at flowers, than to learn their long names. I never could conquer the *andrias* and *folias* of the botanical dictionary. Unluckily, or perhaps, luckily, in my superficial education, the learned languages were neglected; and I must say I infinitely prefer the poetical and simple names of our flowers to your unpronounceable Latin technicalities. There is a great deal of sentiment in many of them. What can be prettier, for instance, than daisy, 'daye's eye which men call the eye of the daye'? Or heart's ease, which in France, they call 'pensée'? Again, does the ugly word *Myosotis* convey any sentimental ideas! But 'forget-me-not' at once reminds us of the flowery epitaph of the slain at Waterloo, and the tale of the gallant knight who plunged into a lake to gather a tuft of flowers for his lady-love, and had only time to fling them on shore and exclaim 'forget me not,' when he was whelmed in the watery deep."

"Where did you find that romantic story, Maria?" inquired Mrs. Shivers.

"I read it in a book, aunt, I assure you, though not in the Botanical Magazine."

"The lady must have been very passionately fond of flowers, if she did not think them too dearly purchased," said Mrs. Wellford.

"And the gentleman must have been a very modest self-estimator, to have set his life at the same value as a tuft of forget-me-not," added Mrs. Shivers.

"Oh, you ladies view the matter in too straight-forward a light. How could he take a better method of proving how highly he valued her slightest wishes?"

"A method which we need not fear will become too common."

"No, indeed. Every spark of romance is now extinguished. I should like to tell the story to Charles!"

"He would say the man did not *mean* to drown."

"Or else question the authenticity of the story. That is

the shortest way, when people meet with any thing which they cannot reconcile to their own ways of thinking and acting. Oh, I will tell the story to Charles and Mr. Hope by and by, and hear what they say to it."

So, thought Rosina, other guests besides Mr. Russell and Lewis are expected.

"Do you visit the Hopes?" said Miss Pakenham, turning to Rosina.

"No."

"Ah, I thought the distance must be too great."

Too great indeed, thought Rosina, but there are distances of rank as well as of parishes.

"Charles can make only one objection to Mr. Hope," pursued Maria, "that he does not employ Stultz. He has offered to introduce them to each other the next time he is in town. Only think of an introduction being necessary to a tailor!"

"Strange indeed! Pray, who is Charles?"

"Oh, my brother. I forgot you did not know him by name. Charles is a great connoisseur in dress. He has written some valuable notes, I assure you, on the Neckclothiana. He says, if he ever publishes, it shall be a little work which he has long had by him and to which he is making continual additions on the subject of hats. He wishes to create a standard of taste. Oh, you laugh, but the manuscript really exists, and is full of similes and quotations. Now do not let me prejudice you against Charles by these little anecdotes, for he is one of the best creatures in the world, only a little inclined to satire and dandyism."

Rosina and Miss Pakenham had made the tour of the conservatory long before Mrs. Wellford and Hannah had sufficiently examined half its contents. "Shall we wait or proceed to the picture gallery?" said Maria.

"Oh, the picture gallery by all means," replied Rosina.

"This way then. To tell you the truth, I am delighted to leave that suffocating atmosphere. What can be more intolerable than a conservatory at the beginning of September?"

Maria led the way to the picture gallery. It was neither very large nor very valuable; but to Rosina, who had not seen ten paintings in her life, it appeared magnificent. A dozen or twenty family portraits, some pretty landscapes and small pieces by modern artists, and several good copies from ancient masters completed the collection. Rosina was de-

lighted; and Miss Pakenham had almost equal pleasure in acquainting her with the subjects and the names of the artists, and in pointing out their merits and defects. Pictures afford abundant materials for conversation. They compared English, Italian, and Dutch scenery, recalled historical and mythological anecdotes to each others' memories, and determined in what respect dress had improved or declined since the days of Vandyke and Sir Peter Lely. When these points had been discussed, they turned to the long table which occupied the middle of the gallery, covered with portfolios and books of engravings. There was an easy gaiety in Miss Pakenham's manners which generally secured her pleasing and being pleased; and she and Rosina seemed drawn by instinct into speedy acquaintanceship. Maria quickly discovered that Rosina was better read and possessed of greater talent than herself; but she neither felt any shadow of jealousy on that account, nor contempt for her unacquaintance with many trifling things that had become household words in the temple of fashion. While Miss Pakenham was shewing her companion some of her own drawings, and pointing out their glaring faults with perfect unconcern and good humour, they were joined by Mrs. Shivers, Mrs. Wellford, and Hannah. The hour before dinner was pleasantly spent; and before the gentlemen had arrived, Mrs. Shivers, to Rosina's delight, invited her to spend a few days at the Pleasance.

"Maria's eyes seem to thank me for the proposal," added she, smiling.

"I only fear you will turn my country girl's head, with your kindness," said Mrs. Wellford.

"No, no, ladies do not turn each other's heads—there is no fear. Let me see. How stand our engagements? The Forsters and Hamiltons are coming to us to-morrow with a train of servants, so that I shall not have a bed unoccupied; but they will only remain a week, or ten days at the longest, in their way to the sea-side, after which Maria and I shall be quite by ourselves; when I hope, my dear, Mrs. Wellford will spare you to us. I must not dare to run away with both her daughters—"

Rosina was smiling with embarrassed pleasure, when Mr. Charles Pakenham entered the gallery. He was neither handsome nor plain, but gentlemanly in manner, and Rosina fancied he looked satirical. She would not have known that his dress was the height of fashion, had not his sister hinted at the fact; since not Pelham, the prince of coxcombs, could

have been freer from every symptom of finery likely to attract vulgar admiration; and it was only the initiated who could duly appreciate the easy and graceful fit of his costume, the finished tie of his cravat, and the negligent disposition of his hair. All these niceties were lost on our village belles, who only saw that he was pale, had light eye-lashes, and rather highly-arched eyebrows.

"What can make Mr. Russell so late, Charles?" said Mrs. Shivers.

"Really, ma'am, I cannot presume to say. Possibly he wishes to exculpate himself from the charge of stupidity, for one of our poets tells us that

"Dullness ever must be regular."

"I half expected Mr. Hope."

"Did you? I did not."

"Why not? You heard me ask him."

"Yes, ma'am, so I have often; but, as Milton says, 'Hope never comes.' I suppose he is afraid of Maria's bright eyes."

"What nonsense, Charles."

"So I think, Maria. I've stood their lightning a good many years, have not I, without being hurt!"

"You know I did not mean that."

"What did you mean, then?"

"That you had assigned no good reason for Mr. Hope's not coming."

"Good reason? How do I know that he has any? Perhaps he does not wish to *lunch* three hours before his usual dinner time. Perhaps he does not patronize English cooks."

"I should hope," said Mrs. Shivers, "my cook was good enough for—"

"Hope? that's tautology. Do you patronize tautology Miss Wellford?"

"I should hardly presume to *patronize* any thing," replied Hannah smiling.

"That is very wrong. Very wrong indeed. Perhaps you do not know that it has been the fashion to patronize every thing, this season. Instead of talking of liking and disliking, the phrase is 'I patronize this'—'I don't patronize that.' It is thought amazingly witty. Have you been shewing off your drawings, Maria?"

He sat down to examine them and, affected to be struck

with admiration. After turning over all which lay on the table, he seized on a portfolio.

"There is nothing in it worth seeing, I assure you, Charles," said Miss Pakenham.

"Allow me to satisfy myself on that point," he returned. "You do your drawings injustice, my dear; they display a great deal of originality. Here, Miss Wellford, you behold what at first you might suppose a mere collection of scratches; but on nearer examination, you will find it to consist of the various parts of Queen Mab's atomy phæton. These diverging lines, you perceive, represent the wagon spokes made of long spiders' legs: this little piece of scribble is the cover of grasshoppers' wings; this acute angle is the cricket-bone whip, while the faint uncertain marks in this direction are a grand and original attempt to represent 'the moonshine's watery beam's.'"

"How can you invent such nonsense, Charles? It is merely the scrap of paper on which I tried my pencils."

"Is it?" said he, with a look of naïveté.

"Here come Mr. Russell and Mr. Pennington at last," said Mrs. Shivers.

Lewis appeared with a countenance of entire serenity. He rejoiced in entering a society from which Mr. Huntley was excluded; and the smiling looks of Rosina, whom he had never seen dressed to so much advantage, completed his satisfaction. Rosina was struck, in her turn, with the perfect ease and good breeding which characterized his manner of addressing Mrs. Shivers and the Pakenhams. As soon as politeness admitted, he secured a chair beside her, and began to talk, merely for the sake of hearing her answer.

"So Matthew is not here."

"No; Mr. Good could not spare him. He was obliged to go to Hundleford."

"Matthew won't have much objection to that, will he? He likes going to Hundleford."

"Yes, but it was a disappointment nevertheless."

"What sort of people are the Hinckleys?"

"Oh, I only know them from seeing the young men and women ride about on horseback. They are very rich, and live in an old manor-house—"

"Something like a tea-caddy. I have seen it in my rides. I asked a countryman whose house it was, and he told me Mr. Hinckley's. There are two yew-trees in the garden, one

representing a peacock, the other a dragon. Did you enjoy your ride here to-day?"

"Yes, very much. It was delightful."

Dinner was now announced, and Lewis offered her his arm. Every one else had been laughing at some witticism of Mr. Pakenham's which Rosina wished Lewis had not prevented her hearing.

"You see I have made no strangers of you," said Mrs. Shivers, as the first course of an elegant but unostentatious dinner was uncovered.

"Is that an excuse or a boast, my dear aunt?" inquired Mr. Pakenham.

"Oh—perhaps a little of both. Why do you ask?"

"Because the former is quite out of fashion, and the latter might be made by the poorest person in the kingdom."

"You are a saucy fellow," said his aunt good-humouredly. "Pray, Mrs. Wellford, is Lady Worrall ill, or absent from Okely Park? I missed her yesterday in her accustomed pew."

"Lady Worrall has a severe cold," said Mrs. Wellford, "which she made worse by going home late from Mr. Good's on Saturday."

"I rather wonder at Mr. Good's tempting her to go out."

"His duties as an apothecary and a hospitable neighbour were in opposition," said Mr. Russell. "Mrs. Good's invitations were already issued, and Lady Worrall did not like to be disappointed of her rubber. In such a case, you know, a medical man could only say 'I think you had better not come, though I shall be happy to see you.'"

"An odd time of year, this, to take cold," observed Mr. Pakenham.

"Oh, people may have colds any time of the year, in this changeable climate," said Maria.

"But the weather has not changed lately," returned Charles.

"I can tell you how Lady Worrall caught her cold, since it excites so much speculation," said Rosina laughing, "she has been very busy lately, superintending the painting and whitewashing of her house; insomuch that the workmen, being rather worried by her constant interference, pretended one day not to know she was underneath the scaffolding, and upset a pail of water, which deluged her from head to foot."

"Ha, ha, ha! A capital shower bath!" cried Mr. Pakenham.

"But Rosina," said Mr. Russell,—"though the pail was certainly overset, how do you know that the men were worried, and that it was not an accident?"

"Oh, Lady Worral told me she was sure they had done it on purpose; and as to her worrying the men, I said she did so then, because she does so always."

"Surely that was fair," said Lewis, glancing at Mr. Russell.

"Poor woman!" said Mrs. Wellford, "she was very warm at the time, and, of course, unprepared for the shock. Then, she stood scolding the men instead of immediately changing her clothes, so that it was no wonder that for three or four days she should be seriously ill."

"And she might have so to this day if it had not been for the nursing of some very kind young ladies," observed Lewis.

"The Miss Wellfords, of course," said Mr. Pakenham. "And pray, Miss Rosina, may I be so bold as to inquire how you entertained the old lady? Probably you read to her works of pious instruction, and received from her lips those precepts of morality and propriety which experienced age is so well qualified to give."

"For shame, Charles!" said Miss Pakenham.

"No," said Rosina, smiling, "I used to read the newspapers to her, and sometimes play a game of cribbage: at other times, I took my work, and told her whatever I could think of, to entertain her."

"Alias, a little innocent scandal, I presume," rejoined Mr. Pakenham, "Talking of scandal—there was an anecdote I heard the other day—quite true, I can pledge my word for it, though I won't name the parties. A certain dowager was in want of a companion—in common parlance, a *toady*. You know the species, don't you? One that hears everlasting stories with indefatigable patience, and keeps bowing and bowing in sign of attention, and nurses the sick lapdog, and arranges the sofa cushions, and writes confidential letters, and keeps accounts. Well, some one thought the situation would be highly eligible for the daughter of an insolvent banker—we won't mention names—who was on the point of starvation; but doubted whether she would be qualified for it on account of her want of education. She described the girl as proficient in nothing but dancing and dress, and doubted even whether she understood simple subtraction. 'Oh, never mind that,' said the gentleman whom she was consulting on the subject, never mind her ignorance of subtraction; if she

understands *detraction*, I dare say that will answer every purpose."

"Excellent," said Lewis.

"But not very politely brought in, I think," said Mrs. Shivers.

Charles put on one of his incomprehensible looks, which made every one laugh. Maria's mirth lasted the longest.

"I cannot imagine what all this laughing is about," said he, coolly. "Mrs. Wellford, may I have the pleasure—?"

The ladies, anxious to avail themselves of the fineness of the evening, did not linger over their dessert, and the gentlemen were too gallant to keep them long in waiting. They re-united on the hall steps, and Mrs. Shivers led the way with Lewis.

"There's old Caius Marius, done in lead, you see," said Mr. Pakenham, pointing to a pedestalled figure with his cane. "Mighty cold the old fellow looks, among the quivering aspens, and as if he were a little ashamed of his Roman drapery, among our superfine cloths and French silks. There, again, stands Mercury, good as new, and quite handsome; but who the next effigy is intended to represent, whether a Grecian lamp-lighter, or Alexander, 'seizing a flambeau with zeal to destroy,' I protest myself unable to inform you."

"Silly Charles!" cried Maria, "do not you see that it is Hymen with his torch?"

"Is it? Nay then, he should have been placed next to Marry-us. Is that bad, Miss Wellford?"

"Miss Wellford, I beg you will not encourage him by laughing. Charles sets up for a fine gentleman, which he will never be as long as he makes bad puns. A punster is on a level with a pickpocket."

"Prove it, prove it, Maria!"

"Nay, I have Dr. Johnson's authority for saying so. I leave proofs for gentlemen; assertion is enough for ladies."

"Luckily for them, sweet creatures, who would often find it difficult to substantiate their assertions."

"But the assertion in the present case was a gentleman's," said Mr. Russell. "Can you favour us, Miss Pakenham, with Dr. Johnson's reasons for treating poor punsters with such severity?"

"No, Mr. Russell, I do not remember that any were stated."

"Nay, then, for the honour of our sex, we will find some for him."

"Not I," said Charles, "for I vow I think punning a very allowable recreation; and it is sufficient for the world to know it is patronized by myself and Shakspeare."

"*Ego et Rex meus!*" said Maria.

"Come and admire this pretty tablet," cried Lewis, a little in advance.

"It was a whim of Maria's," said Mrs. Shivers—"the motto is happy, is it not?"

"*Negli boschi, la vera
Vertù alberga; il cittadino stuolo
Sol la spoglia ha di quella, o il nome solo.*"

"Happy for countryfolks that choose to apply it, with a smirk, to themselves," said Charles—"It rather cuts up us poor West-enders."

"What does it mean?" asked Rosina of Mr. Russell in a low voice.

"Let me see," said he, "I must rub up my Italian. It means, I believe,

"*The shades are Virtue's home; her slough alone
Is found in cities; sometimes but her name.*"

"Condensation condensed!" said Mrs. Shivers. "Metastasio uses so few superfluous epithets that he cannot often be compressed; but you have curtailed half a line."

"And half an idea," interrupted Mr. Pakenham. "Listen to my version, and judge which is most faithful.—

"*Virtue lives in the woods, and deeply loathes
The cits, who have her name and her old clothes.*"

"Exquisite poetry!" said Lewis. "How felicitous is the idea of cits walking to and fro in Virtue's cast off garments!"

"Sneer at Metastasio, not at me," said Mr. Pakenham. "Why, 'tis a sight you may see every day in London streets! Affectation in an old veil of Modesty, Assurance in a cast off surtout of Frankness, Bravado flourishing a cane that had been dropped by Bravery, and so forth to the end of the chapter, 'all a sham,' as Clara Fisher says. Where are we going? To the water-side?—Suppose we have a little row. Do you patronize rowing, Mrs. Wellford?"

They had reached the river side, where a wherry was moored to a landing place.

"Are you afraid, Mrs. Wellford?" said Mrs. Shivers.

"Not in the least," she replied.

"Let me hand you in, then!" said Lewis. "I see there are some nice sculls."

"Sculls," repeated Hannah.

"Yes, not dead men's bones, but little oars, or oar-ettes. Were you never in a boat before?"

"No," said Hannah, "the river, you know is not navigable at Summerfield."

"Let me give you a word of advice, then. Do not mistake the boat for a drawing-room, for if you attempt to *promenade* in it, we shall infallibly be upset."

"Is there any danger?" said Rosina, drawing back her foot. "The seat seems very near the water's edge."

"No, no; no danger in the world," said Mrs. Shivers. "I did mean to have had a railing made, but we so long habituated ourselves to use the boat without one, that we have no fear; and the water, you see, is so shallow, that the sand and pebbles can be perceived beneath."

Thus re-assured, Rosina ventured to enter, and as Charles and Lewis intended to row, Mr. Russell seated himself with the ladies. Rosina, finding how evenly the boat was trimmed, began to be ashamed of her fears, and bent over the water to watch the fish darting to and fro, so as now and then to alarm her mother, who begged her to sit still. She frequently said "Dear mamma, there is no danger," and secretly wondered how any one could be afraid. There is something in the motion of a boat which disposes people to reverie, and Mr. Russell and Hannah were unusually silent. Not so the rowers, whose exertions began to make them rather too warm. Having passed the skirts of the pleasure ground, the river wound among sloping meadows, and the trees no longer screened them from the south-west wind. Lewis, who had been out of practice since his quitting Oxford, found his hands rather stiff, and proposed raising the sail. The ladies had no objection, and Charles prepared to act as steersman. After flapping to and fro for a little while so as to alarm the Wellfords, the sail caught the wind, and they glided rapidly forward.

"How delightful!" said Rosina.

Lewis raised his countenance, glowing with exercise and animation. "Yes," said he, "this quick yet easy motion is much more luxurious than the regular jolt of rowing. You

must take care, however, to sit still, Rosina, for every thing depends on the trimming of the boat."

"More than on the trimming of a hat; I can tell you," said Charles.

"Or of an M. P.," added Maria.

"Oh, there is no fear," said Rosina.

"My dear Rosina, pray attend to Lewis's directions," said her mother, "a little fear is preferable to danger."

"Certainly," said Rosina smiling, and dipping her pretty fingers in the water; she began to hum 'Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,' to which Maria playfully added a second.

"I propose," said Mr. Pakenham, "that instead of tantalizing us by singing *sotto voce*, you should awaken the echoes with some boat glee song in right earnest."

"Take care, Charles, or you will run us aground. We are coming to the shallows."

"Never fear," said he, "I know the river well enough. By the by, Maria, do you remember that ridiculous accident which happened to old Mrs. Wigmore when we were going up to Richmond?"

"For shame, Charles.—The woman was almost drowned."

"This Mrs. Wigmore," pursued Charles, laughing, "measured nearly two yards in circumference, and probably weighed a ton. How any one could think of inviting her to partake of an aquatic excursion, I cannot imagine. She was terrified lest every barge and bridge on the river should fall foul of us; and when the Diana steamer went by, good heavens! how she was alarmed at the swell! At length we hoisted a sail,—ha! ha!—I think I see her now—she shut her eyes, clenched her hands,—ha! ha! ha!—and thought every moment would launch her into eternity. At every tack, she nearly fell into convulsions; and at length,—ha! ha! ha!—at length,—ho! ho!—a squall overtook us,—she set up one to match it,—ho! ho! ho!—and was launched into the deep."

"Shocking!" cried Mrs. Shivers, "and what became of her?"

"Her pelisse," continued he, "her orange coloured pelisse, stiffened with whalebone and buckram, for a time bore her up—her parasol—ho! ho! ho!—which she grasped vigorously with both hands, caught the wind, and conveyed her like a majestic barge, right towards the Wandsworth coast; rich, as you know, in slime and rushes; and there, among the congregated mud of ages, she was safely deposited, howl-

ing most piteously, while all who beheld her were in convulsions!"

"Pray, Maria," said Mrs. Shivers, "how much of this tale may we credit?"

"Indeed, aunt," said Maria, laughing, "nearly the whole of it is true. We were not far, however from shore, and the parasol was an umbrella, so that the adventure was not quite so miraculous."

"And did none of you fine gentlemen try to save her?" inquired Mr. Russell.

"Not one of us," returned Charles, "she would have sunk any one who had taken her in tow. I, indeed, thought of jumping in, just for the look of the thing; but by the time I had taken off and folded up my coat and waistcoat, she was safely stranded. Good luck, what a pickle she was in!"

"Indeed she was!" ejaculated Maria. "Such a pelisse!"

"And such legs!"

"Poor woman!" said Hannah.

"How very ridiculous!" said Rosina.

"I begged her umbrella as a memento of the catastrophe," said Mr. Pakenham, "and the print of her nails is to be seen in its handle to this day."

"Oh, Charles, Charles!"

"To finish the scene, she lifted up her voice and wept so vociferously that the households of Lord Egremont and the Archbishop of Dublin rushed down to the water side to see what was the matter."

"Charles! Charles!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho!" shouted Mr. Pakenham, laughing convulsively, "I shall never forget that day. The party was unique in every respect. Mrs. Wigmore's husband was a puny little fellow that put one exactly in mind of a Vauxhall sandwich. Then there was a girl who played off a great many fine airs on me, and was continually placing her foot in my way, for no other reason that I could perceive, than to show me that *for once* she had on silk stockings; for she had prodigiously thick ankles. There was a pair of lovers too, billing and cooing amazingly, of which I, sitting directly opposite, had the full benefit; and never was I more annoyed in my life—I don't patronize love-making."

"I thought the ladies were going to favour us with a song," said Mr. Russell.

"Will you join us in a glee, Charles?" said Maria.

" You know," he replied, " what poor assistance I can give you—Perhaps Miss Rosina Wellford—"

" Oh, indeed, indeed, I cannot sing!" interrupted Rosina.

" That, of course," returned Mr. Pakenham; " I never expect to obtain a song from any young lady, not professional, with less than half an hour's entreaty. I will take out my watch. Now for it. Pennington! mind the turn of the river—Ahem! Miss Rosina Wellford—"

As he spoke, the sail, catching the breeze in a new direction, changed sides so suddenly as to excite a scream from all the females. Lewis exclaimed, " Sit still!" but Rosina, on the side unexpectedly lowered, unable to control her alarm, started up, lost her balance, and was precipitated into the river. The boat would assuredly have upset, had not Mr. Russell saved it by immediately rising, while Lewis, with a hasty interjection, sprang into the water after Rosina. It was little more than breast high, therefore not very dangerous, and Lewis, whether by swimming or wading, soon conveyed his hapless mistress to the shore, where, still supporting her drenched and trembling form, he looked at her with a mixture of partiality and reproach, as he said, " Did not I advise you to sit still?" They were both too much agitated to have even heard the cry of terror which arose from their companions at the moment of Rosina's submersion. Charles, who had hastily scrambled over the ladies from his post at the rudder, seized one of the oars, while Mr. Russell took the other, and a few vigorous strokes brought them to the side of the dripping pair. The three minutes which had seemed interminable to Mrs. Wellford and Hannah, appeared less than a moment to Lewis.

Rosina, wet, forlorn, and terrified, had not yet lost much of her usual self as to be quite insensible to ridicule. She hastily released herself from Lewis's arms, cast a fearful glance at her mother, whom she expected to look angry; and at Mr. Pakenham, whom she expected to look satirical; then turned half reluctantly towards Lewis, whom she knew not how to thank, and burst into tears. Hannah was at her side in an instant; and Lewis's arm, in the fervour of the moment, again thrown round her waist, while every one's countenance expressed sincere concern. But Rosina again quickly put back Lewis's offered support, wiped her eyes, and with many blushes assured her friends that she was very silly and had been very much frightened, but not at all hurt. The only remaining fear was of her catching cold, and it was therefore

rapidly resolved, that she should return to the house on foot as fast as she could, accompanied by Hannah and Maria, while the elder ladies walked home at a more moderate pace, and Mr. Russell and Charles took back the boat. Lewis made the best of his way to Mr. Pakenham's dressing-room, where he obtained a temporary change of clothing; and Charles returned to the boat, looking extremely concerned, since it makes a great difference whether the person submerged be a pretty young woman, or a fat matron weighing a ton. Rosina knew not the sincerity of his commiseration; and though her mother's "how *could* you be so foolish, my dear?" had more of pity than displeasure in it, she dreaded that the time *would* come when she should be both scolded and quizzed. Her vaunts of not being afraid had been very ignominiously contradicted; and various little circumstances which she doubted not had been noticed by Mr. Pakenham's quick eye, made her regard her preserver with no very grateful feelings. Neither was it excessively pleasant to be completely wet through, and to have one's best clothes clinging about one with the tenacity of a bathing gown, to say nothing of the mud they had collected. To cry, too! before strangers; and *such* strangers! people to whom she so particularly wished to appear in her best and most lady-like colours! All these untoward circumstances made poor Rosina's heart swell almost to bursting; and her attempt to speak in an unconstrained tone to Hannah and Maria nearly ended in a sob. They pitied her too much to expect her to talk; and as soon as they arrived at the house, Maria had her own bed warmed, and assisted Rosina in undressing. A fire was lighted, at which Hannah dried her sister's clothes, and Miss Pakenham ran down stairs to make her some tea as quickly as possible. Once in bed, Rosina's woes gradually subsided: she regained the command of her voice, and was able to speak cheerfully and gratefully to Miss Pakenham on her return, and to blame her own foolish conduct with a very good grace. Her mother now entered with Mrs. Shivers, who very earnestly pressed her remaining at the Pleasance for the night, which Mrs. Wellford seemed much inclined to second; but Rosina, alarmed at the thought of encountering the gay people who were to arrive on the following day, declared she never took cold, and made light of the whole affair. It was therefore decided that she should in the evening return to Summerfield with her mother and sister, but in the mean time, remain by the fire in Miss Pakenham's room. Mrs.

Wellford and Hannah now accompanied Mrs. Shivers down stairs, but Maria insisted on drinking tea with Rosina, and by her cheerful kindness, rendered this almost the pleasantest hour of a pleasant day. With the moment of leave-taking, Rosina's uneasiness and constraint of manner returned; she remained above stairs till the carriage was actually at the door, and then descended, encumbered by a furred cloak of Mrs. Shivers's, which she had been compelled to wear in addition to her own wraps. Lewis approached her with affectionate solicitude in his looks, and Mr. Pakenham, advancing at the same moment, accosted her with "I shall wish the wherry had been sunk before we thought of encumbering its unlucky planks, Miss Rosina, if you suffer in consequence of your accident. My lamentations are perfectly disinterested, you must be aware, for of course it was highly gratifying to us to behold you rising like Venus from the sea; and as to Mr. Pennington, he was a hero and Leander, both under one."

Rosina dreaded meeting his satiric eye; and after bidding farewell to Mrs. Shivers and Maria, who reminded her of her promised visit, she hastily curtseyed to Mr. Pakenham, and took Lewis's offered arm. Charles accompanied them to the carriage door, and could not help indulging, to the last, in his 'dear wit.' "You had pleasant weather for your bathing, you will grant," said he, laughing, as they crossed the hall. "In future, whenever you meet with a tallow-chandler advertising his 'short dips,' I dare say you will think of the Pleasance. I should like to have been in Pennington's shoes at *one* time. However, he is in mine, at present, which amounts to the same thing."

"Not quite," said Lewis, stealing a look at Rosina's glowing cheek, and pressing her hand fervently. She hastily withdrew it and entered the carriage. Mr. Pakenham bowed, and she thought irony lurked in his smile. So effectually does an hour of pain damp a day of pleasure, that Rosina took scarcely any part in the animated conversation of her mother and sister on the events of the day, and spent the greater part of the ride in ruminating on the mischances of the afternoon. She had scarcely said or done any thing that she did not now wish altered. She fancied she heard Mr. Pakenham describing the catastrophe of the water-party with as much zest as the calamity of the unfortunate Mrs. Wigmore; she feared that to Mrs. Shivers she must have appeared heedless and weak; to Mr. Russell, affected; and to Lewis, ungrateful. Pondering on these topics, she scarcely felt the feverish throb-

bing of her head or the ague chills that ran through her frame. Her night, however, was sleepless; and, on the following morning, she found herself labouring under so severe a cold as to prevent her from rising.

CHAPTER XVII.

EFFECTS OF COLD BATHING.

"RUSSELL!—" said Lewis Pennington, drawing a deep breath that sounded excessively like a sigh, as they walked home from Mrs. Shivers's, "I certainly am in love!"

"That is a remarkable discovery!" returned Mr. Russell, laughing. "Truly, it places you nearly on a level with Newton and Mungo Park! The object of your visit to Summerfield is answered then, I suppose; for in my poor judgment, you came ready primed and loaded, and only required a touch to go off."

"Do not laugh at me," said Lewis, still *al sospiroso*, "for I am very serious."

"Well, I will be serious too," returned his friend, "and say that I think your love-affairs are in a very flourishing train. Nothing could be more lucky than your rescue of Rosina to-day; and to-morrow, I dare say you will have a violent cold, which will work upon her compassion."

"She is more likely to take cold than I am, I fear," said Lewis.

"Oh, do not despair," rejoined his companion, "I perceive a very promising huskiness in your voice already."

"As to my *rescue*, as you term it," pursued Lewis, "the risk to myself was so slight that it would be ridiculous to plume myself upon it; and I fear it made no very strong impression on her whom I most wish to please."

"Nay," interrupted Mr. Russell, "if Rosina is untouched by the service you have rendered her, her heart must be as hard as the nether millstone. But I think differently of her. What a blush glowed on her cheek when we reached the bank!"

- Lewis smiled, though the darkness prevented Mr. Russell

from seeing the momentary illumination of his countenance. "All might be well enough," exclaimed he abruptly, "if it were not for that confounded fellow, Huntley!"

"I manœuvred to walk with Rosina to-day," said Mr. Russell, "in order to give her a little lecture on her behaviour of Saturday night; but somehow the subject stuck in my throat, and, like the man in the old song, 'never a word could I say!'"

"I am glad of it," said Lewis, "for I would not owe any change in her manner to interference. No, let her feel and judge for herself; though I wish to heaven we were fairly rid of that sly, malicious, double-faced, insinuating——"

"My dear Lewis," interrupted Mr. Russell, "I cannot hear poor Huntley thus abused. It is not his fault that a lively, thoughtless girl should be dazzled by his wit, genius, and varied power of pleasing."

"Mr. Russell," said Lewis gravely, "it is fine to preach moderation to another; but wait till your own time comes—wait till he supplants yourself, and then see what becomes of your patience! Perhaps the trial may not be so very far off."

"I am at a loss to understand you," said Mr. Russell. "Supplant me? In what manner? What do you mean?"

Lewis laughed expressively, and replied, "We lovers, Mr. Russell, are quick-sighted."

"I had thought till now," rejoined his friend, "that Love was blind."

"Yes, to the faults of his mistress," said Lewis, still laughing, "but lovers, like free-masons, have a wonderful knack of finding out each other."

They walked on in silence; till Mr. Russell resumed, with "But, Pennington, I wish you would tell me what you alluded to just now—Supplant me!—What could you be thinking of?"

"Aha! that rankles, does it?" said Lewis. "My meaning was full plain, I think."

"Obscure enough for a dull fellow like me to miss it," said Mr. Russell, rather uneasily. "Where I have advanced no pretensions, I do not see how I can well be supplanted."

"Is not my cousin Hannah," inquired Lewis with a smile, "almost as charming as her sister?"

"Ahem!" responded Mr. Russell,—"'And is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?'"

"Very good, Russell! I take!" laughed Lewis. "You are very sly and very silent, and I am just the reverse of both;

but take heed, I advise you—fair and softly do not *always* win the day."

Lewis found a letter from Marianne awaiting him at the vicarage. At the head of the sheet was written in Dr. Pennington's large, firm hand—

‘ Dear Son,
‘ What are you doing at Summerfield ? ’

“ I believe,” said Lewis, as he read this laconic inquiry to his friend, “ my truest answer would be—

‘ Dear Father,
‘ Playing the fool ! ’ ”

“ Do you think, Lewis, your father would be perfectly satisfied at your engaging yourself to Rosina Wellford.”

“ I don't know,” said Lewis gloomily. “ Yes, I think he would. He is not mercenary. Once, when I used to flirt a good deal with a Miss Edgar, an heiress, he said, ‘ I would rather be pleased with my daughter-in-law's disposition than her fortune.’ ”

“ If you *have* any doubts, Lewis, now is the time for acting with decision, and tearing yourself from Rosina while her affections are apparently her own. I have not spoken so plainly before, because you never treated me with sufficient confidence to excuse my doing so. You will attribute my straight-forwardness to the right motive, for I need hardly say, that the loss of such a guest as you are, will be excessively regretted by me, come when it may.”

“ I must not linger here much longer,” sighed Lewis, twisting Marianne's letter into a thousand shapes; “ September has come, and I am just where I was in August, only some fathoms deeper in love.”

Here the dialogue ended.

Rosina awoke on Tuesday morning, to a consciousness of all the miseries of a severe cold. Among her most praiseworthy habits was that of rising early, like Dryden's *Emilia*, “ to sport and trip along in cool of day;” and even indisposition could not incline her to feel a day spent in bed in any other light than that of a penance. Her mind was quite on the alert; and the sound of voices in the parlour beneath, soon after breakfast, increased her mortification at being kept in dormitorial confinement.

“ What has kept you so long ? ” cried she, rather impa-

tiently, as her sister re-entered her bed-room. "Did not I hear voices down stairs?"

"Yes, Mr. Huntley called; and I had to tell him of your indisposition as an excuse for our not sitting to him to-day."

"It was very kind of you," said Rosina, "to sacrifice yourself for me."

"Sacrifice myself," repeated Hannah, laughing. "That is certainly rather a strong expression. I do not feel it to be any sacrifice."

"I am afraid I should, in your place," said Rosina.

"I shall enjoy myself much more," said Hannah, "sitting by your bed-side and talking over all that happened yesterday, than in sitting for my likeness to Mr. Huntley. Dear Lewis Pennington! I shall love him as long as I live. How heroically he behaved!"

"So he did, certainly," said Rosina,—"and yet the water was not very deep."

"That was not Lewis's fault," returned Hannah, gaily, "and it was quite deep enough to drown you, if he had not sprung to your assistance. No body else in the boat would have acted with such promptitude; unless indeed, Mr. Russell—"

"Oh, Hannah! no man would stand by and see a woman drown! especially in the presence of ladies—"

"Well, perhaps not," replied Hannah, "but there are different ways of setting about a thing. Mr. Pakenham would have stopped to fold up his coat and waist-coat."

"My dear, you cannot conceive what a dread I have of that man! did not he frighten you exceedingly?"

"Not in the least," said Hannah. "His wit amused me, and I felt myself far too insignificant a person to attract his ill-nature. No gentleman would dare to ridicule a lady to her face; and as to what he might say of me in my absence, I shall probably never see him again, therefore it does not give me the slightest concern."

"How tranquil you are!" said Rosina, with a sigh. "I wish I had half as much philosophy."

"The worst he could say of us," pursued Hannah, "would be that we were country girls without wit or fashion, and where would be the mighty harm in that?"

"They say," resumed Rosina, after a pause, "that there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. Now, in a romance, it seems very grand for a lady to fall into a river, and for a gentleman to bring her out again; but when

it comes to be plain matter of fact, there are many little things which a novelist takes care to leave out, and which, I am afraid, give the whole business rather a ridiculous air."

"If that is the case," said Hannah, "every one was too much alarmed to notice it. Mrs. Shivers was as pale as death, and Mr. Russell and Mr. Pakenham rowed as if their lives depended on every stroke. I thought I never saw any one look more noble than Lewis did when he came up to you! —flushed with exertion, and glowing with courage and affection, and every honest feeling."

"I hardly dare ask you how *I* looked," said Rosina, wistfully.

"Why, certainly," said Hannah, smiling, "I *have* seen you to more advantage. When you first appeared from the water, you were clinging fast to Lewis's neck, and glad enough I was to see you; but when we landed, you were standing with your back to him, looking very red and very sulky, your frock covered to your knees with mud, your hair drenched, your bonnet out of shape; and in short, if Mr. Pakenham *had* been inclined to laugh——"

"Oh, horrible! I see myself exactly," cried Rosina, tossing on her pillow; "do not go on, for pity's sake!"

"Do you know," pursued Hannah, "I thought you behaved rather unkindly to your preserver——"

"My preserver! pshaw! when the water was not four feet deep!"

"Well then, to poor Lewis. I can make allowance for all awkwardness of feeling; but still, instead of looking as if he had done you an injury rather than a service, I should, in your place, have thanked him gratefully, and there would have been an end of it."

"My dear Hannah, you always do no more than just the thing you ought. I could not trust myself to speak a syllable, so afraid was I of that odious Mr. Pakenham."

"Still, ridicule, Rosina?" said Hannah. "What a pity it is you allow yourself to be so much governed by so weak a fear!"

"Oh, Hannah? I am too unwell to bear sermonizing to-day. Do fetch a book, there is a dear girl, and read to me, for I have thought enough of these cross accidents all night."

Hannah complied with her wish; and was debating what book she should take up to her sister, when she was again detained by a visitor. It was Lewis Pennington.

"Good morning, Hannah, said he. "How are you all, this morning? and especially, how is Rosina after her accident?"

"I am sorry to say she is confined to her bed," replied Hannah.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lewis, with a look of alarm.

"But there is no need for apprehension," she continued. "Rosina takes a fit of illness as she does a fit of any thing else; anger, for instance; it comes on very suddenly, and goes off almost as rapidly."

"A fit of anger," repeated Lewis smiling. "What a good-humoured sister you are, Hannah! But should not Rosina have advice?"

"Oh, mamma knows perfectly well how to treat Rosina's colds. We may be thankful that she has escaped with nothing worse."

"We may indeed," said Lewis.

"And I hope you will not suffer for your heroic conduct," added she. "We shall never forget it."

"Heroic! you will make me ashamed of myself," cried Lewis. "The water was scarcely breast-high."

"True; but as we were observing just before you came, you did not pause to consider its depth. Yours was the action of a moment."

"Did Rosina say so?" asked Lewis, quickly.

"I think," said the truth-telling Hannah, "the observation was mine, and that it was Rosina who assented to it."

At any rate, thought Lewis, complacently, they have made the affair the subject of conversation. "My dear Hannah," said he drawing his chair closer to hers, to deal frankly with you who have so much sincerity yourself, I was rather surprised—Come, I must speak the truth—rather hurt, at Rosina's conduct yesterday. As to thanking me, or any thing of the sort, that would have been nonsense; but without setting any inordinate value on the little service I was able to render her, surely a wet jacket deserved a smile—hey, Hannah?—a word or a look? She would have given as much as that, would not she, to Mr. Huntley, if he had offered her an umbrella on a rainy day."

"Oh, Lewis!" said Hannah, smiling, "you must not be hard upon Rosina. You know her chief, almost her only fault, is being too keenly alive to ridicule. That satirical Mr. Pakenham, with his story of the fat old lady, so alarmed

her imagination, that she scarcely dared to look or speak, for fear of exposing herself to his irony."

"Was that all?" cried Lewis. "Insolent puppy! If he had dared to utter, or even look irony at such a moment as that, I would have knocked him down!" And starting up, Lewis walked towards the window, and bent through the open casement, apparently occupied in inhaling the perfume of sweet peas and mignonette, which it admitted. After a pause of some length, he exclaimed, "What a sweet place this Summerfield is! I envy Russell the power of remaining in it."

"You would hardly wish, however, to change situations with him, I should think."

"As to that, nobody, you know, would like to give up their identity; but distinct from such a feeling, why do you think I should not be happy to change with Mr. Russell?"

"He has a limited income, a small establishment, no wife or near relations, little congenial society, and a variety of duties which he must regularly perform, willing or unwilling."

"Still, Hannah, he is contented, and might be happy, if he would but marry."

"Perhaps he thinks he is not rich enough."

"He has more than he can spend as a single man, except in charity. An uncle left him four or five thousand pounds last year."

"I suppose, then, he prefers a single life."

"Why, we must think so, for want of a better supposition, and yet no one is more able to appreciate really good female society. Perhaps, however, he is a despised man, or has reason to think that he should be one."

"I can hardly think that."

Lewis looked at her earnestly. There was no covert meaning to be detected in her face. Meeting his eyes, however, and perceiving their penetrating expression, Hannah slightly blushed, at the idea of having possibly said too much. Mrs. Wellford entered at the same moment, followed by Matthew, who shook Lewis heartily by the hand.

"Pennington, you are a fine fellow!" said he. "My mother tells me you have saved Rosina from drowning."

Lewis made light of the affair.

"Well," said Matthew, "I am glad you seem none the worse for it; but Rosina is in bed, I hear. Shall I step up to her, mother? I will bleed her, if you like."

Mrs. Wellford did not consider this measure advisable, and Hannah prepared to return to Rosina, now that her mother and brother could supply her place in the parlour. "Tell her, Hannah," cried Matthew, calling after her as she went upstairs, "that if she likes to be bled, I'm no bungler. I opened a vein for Mrs. Hinckley yesterday, therefore Rosina need not laugh at me. I've practised upon the poor this twelvemonth!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALL IN THE WRONG.

ROSINA was so much better, the next day, as to be able to leave her bed, though her mother still imprisoned her to her room. Her books and drawing materials, and Hannah's society, left her little to complain of; and a little rose-coloured note of inquiry from Miss Pakenham, assisted in raising her spirits. Voices in the parlour beneath again provoked her curiosity; and while she was debating whether the tones were those of Mr. Huntley or Lewis Pennington, Hannah made her appearance.

"Mr. Huntley and Miss Phœbe Holland are down stairs," said she.

"Mr. Huntley and Phœbe Holland!" repeated Rosina. "What! did they come together?"

"I believe they fell in with each other in the lane. Miss Phœbe came to ask us to accompany them on a gipsy party to-morrow. The Misses Browns are staying at the Grange, and the Goods are going to join them in a pic-nic."

"I suppose mamma will say I am not well enough," observed Rosina. "Is any one else to be of the party?"

"Mr. Russell and Lewis Pennington; and now, Phœbe has given a sort of joking invitation to Mr. Huntley."

"I should like to go, amazingly. Will mamma let me, do you think? I am sure I am well enough."

"Mamma at first refused outright; but so much was said about it, that knowing how quickly your colds pass off, she began to waver, and sent me up-stairs to ask what you yourself thought about it."

"The woman that deliberates is lost!" cried Rosina, joyfully. "Since mamma wavers, you may be sure she will let me go. My dear, tell her I never felt better in my life."

"But, Rosina—"

"But, Hannah! say no more about it; I assure you it is the fact. There was not the least occasion for my remaining up-stairs to-day. Feel my hands; are they feverish? I am perfectly well."

"I hope you are," said Hannah, slowly retiring.

"Depend upon it, my dear. Make haste and tell mamma I hope she will accept the invitation by all means."

Rosina's spirits prevented her shewing any signs of indisposition during the remainder of the day. Lewis called, but only saw Mrs. Wellford. On the following morning, Rosina actually felt quite well; but now an unforeseen obstacle to the gipsy party presented itself. Mrs. Wellford arose with a very bad headache, which completely disinclined her to join the pic-nic. The girls immediately gave up every idea of leaving her, but though they said nothing of their disappointment, their mother was vexed to occasion it, and proposed their accompanying Mr. and Mrs. Good. She required no nursing; nothing but darkness and quiet; and after a little good-natured altercation, Hannah yielded, more for Rosina's sake than her own. Accordingly, at about one o'clock, to Mr. Good's they proceeded; and found Tom, William, and Fanny, who were to be of the party, scampering up and down stairs in high spirits. Matthew ran in from the surgery, to have a kiss from his sisters and ten minutes' gossip. He could not be spared to accompany them; he was going over to 'old Kippis of the Grove,' and seemed so happy in his growing importance as to have little room for regret. He told Rosina she looked feverish, wished Hannah would wear smarter looking bonnets, but allowed that as times went, neither of the girls were ugly; after which, with another kiss from each, he ran away. Mrs. Good, in a new bonnet, was packing up cold chicken, tongue, and apple puffs; and presently her husband drove up to the door, after going his morning rounds; Matthew jumped into the gig, received his parting instructions for the Grove, and went off. Mr. Good was glad to find every one and every thing ready to the appointed minute, and the walking party proceeded to the Grange. Here they found tongues clattering, provisions packing, and silk bonnets popping in and out of rooms and closets with prodigious rapidity. The Miss Browns were old acquaintance; and they seemed

more voluble and more finely dressed than ever. The want of punctuality in 'the beaux' was grievously regretted. Lewis at length made his appearance, but had to apologize for the non-attendance of Mr. Russell. He had not seen Rosina since the day at the Pleasance; and having hurried through his excuses as speedily as possible, he approached her to hope that she had entirely recovered from her cold. Rosina blushed, and attempted to falter her tardy thanks, but became embarrassed, and was glad that he interrupted her with inquiries after her mother. Mr. Huntley had made his *entrée* immediately after Lewis; and he no sooner perceived Rosina than his dark eyes brightened, and he hastened to congratulate her on her recovery.

"Your accident was truly alarming," said he. "How fortunate it was that Mr. Pennington acted with such courage and promptitude! No man ought to have done less, but few men have an opportunity afforded them of doing so much; and you will pardon me, I think, for being thankful that such is the case. I would hardly wish you a second fall into the water, even that I might be at hand to jump in after you."

Rosina smiled, and looking towards Lewis, who was within hearing, saw him shrug his shoulders and curl his lip. In another moment, he was at her side, and had drawn her arm, with a smile, within his own. The party were starting; and Rosina, though she heard Huntley still making the accident the subject of his discourse to Hannah, felt that she ought not to complain of her fate.

The point of destination was a favourite spot on Hexley Common, which the Miss Browns, who loved to "set something going," had discovered on the preceding Sunday to be a famous place for a dinner. The donkey chaise was in requisition for the children, as well as for the transportation of camp-stools, shawls, and umbrellas; and the walkers proceeded in sociable little knots of two and three, as it suited their pleasure. Huntley, to his mortification, was entangled among the Miss Browns and Miss Hollands, beyond the power of escape or rescue; Hannah followed Mr. and Mrs. Good, and Lewis and Rosina, a few paces in arrear, occasionally joined them in conversation, till, quitting the fields, they entered a kind of little thicket, intersected by many small paths. Here they gradually separated beyond speaking distance, and finally lost sight of each other.

Lewis seemed unlike his usual self, plunged in reverie, and speaking in monosyllables. After walking *tête-à-tête* with

Rosina for some time, he became suddenly aware that a silence of awkward length required to be broken ; but, like the ghosts of yore, he seemed obliged to wait till she should speak first. This she presently did, with a very simple inquiry.

"Have you heard from home lately?"

"Yes, the night before last. My father asked me, Rosina, —what I do at Summerfield."

"You must tell him then," said Rosina, forcing a laugh, "that you save young ladies from drowning."

Lewis was silent ; and, with a slight degree of confusion, she resumed.

"Lewis, I am afraid—Hannah thinks that I—I—"

"That what, Rosina ? Of what are you afraid ?—Not of me—You *need* not be—"

"I was only going to say, that, after all that happened at the Pleasance, when you acted so bravely and so generously, I feared I must have seemed ungrateful—"

"Not in the least, Rosina—"

"At any rate, I ought to have thanked you: which I do now, very gratefully."

"Pray, say no more about it ; I was but too happy to be of any service."

"You are none the worse, I hope—"

"Not in the least. No, Rosina, I look back on that day with more pleasure than pain."

"That odious Mr. Pakenham—"

"Ah, Hannah told me you were dreadfully afraid of him ; and that I might thank *him* for any little unkindness which had appeared in your manner. But, Rosina, why would you allow the acquaintance of an hour to have more influence over you than an old attached friend ? Why are you so sensitive to ridicule ? It is not for your happiness. I hope," added he earnestly, "that you will forgive me for being so plain-spoken."

There was an accent of tenderness in Lewis's tone which disarmed anger.

"Certainly, Lewis," she replied.

"I have been very bold to say so much," pursued Lewis, in a more hurried manner ; "but I must take shelter under the wide privileges of a cousin."

Rosina laughed ; and Lewis, encouraged by this, added, "You know, cousins venture to tell each other of their little faults sometimes."

"Undoubtedly," said Rosina, "and now you are going to lecture me a little on mine, I suppose."

She was thinking of the Pleasance; *he* was thinking of Saturday evening.

"If I dared," said he, emboldened by her smile, "I certainly would. Come, I will extend the same privilege to you: we will confess our sins and grant mutual absolution. Now tell me, Rosy, what spirit of mischief inspired you that night at Mrs. Good's?"

"None, that I know of," replied she, laughing, with a little pique.

"Nay, Rosina," said he, more seriously, "do not feign forgetfulness or misapprehension. You know you meant to vex me."

"Vex you!—by what?"

"By almost every thing you looked, did, and said."

"Really, Lewis, I do not know what right you have to accuse me of such intentions."

"The right, perhaps, may admit of more dispute than the intentions," said he; "but you know I am only using my cousinly privilege. We agreed to grant each others absolution."

"I agreed to no such thing, and I think ideas of cousinly privilege may extend too far."

"Well, Rosina, do not let us cavil about trifles. Question my right, if you will; but yield to that honest candour which generally distinguishes you. Say that you are sorry you gave me pain, and the affair shall be at rest for ever."

"Sorry I gave you pain! How came you to take offence so easily? By the manner in which you put the question, you would imply that offence was *meant*."

"And surely it was so."

"Nonsense!"

"Remember your blush when I showed you that passage of Madame de Genlis'!"

"I blushed with displeasure. What right had you to apply the passage to me?"

"Never mind the *right*, Rosina. The passage did apply. You know you were inflicting pain on one who loved you."

"Nonsense!" said Rosina, colouring; and wishing much to run away.

"True enough," said Lewis, who thought that now or never should be the moment. "For you to pretend to think that I care no more for you than one cousin does for another, would

be as absurd as to say that the sun does not shine, or the grass grow; you *do* know that I love you, though how much it is impossible you *should* know. That point requires no settling; but it is a most important one for me to know whether you really have any serious regard for me or not. No woman can be a coquette who truly loves."

"Upon my word, Mr. Pennington," said Rosina, whose cheeks were blazing, "you are talking very strangely."

"Tell me, Rosina!" exclaimed he, stopping short, and dropping the little switch with which he had been very industriously threshing the underwood—"Tell me, Rosina," said he, taking her hand, "that my love is not quite hopeless—that you can return such honest affection as mine."

"I cannot," said she, snatching away her hand, and walking on quickly.

"Oh! how have I been deceived!" exclaimed Lewis.

"Not by me," said Rosina. "I never feigned more than I felt."

"Ungrateful girl!" cried he.

"How ungrateful?" said Rosina. "We were playfellows in childhood, and, within the last month, you have been kind enough to bestow much attention upon me; but that does not necessarily oblige me to return your affection, does it? Nay, *are* our affections in our power? I am sure they are not."

Lewis accompanied her silently for some time; and then as if to himself, rather than her, murmured—

"Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—Oh! and is all forgot?"

He looked earnestly at her. Rosina breathed quickly, but made no answer. Then, with sudden passion, he exclaimed—"Detested Huntley! it is he who has stepped between us! Mark my words, Rosina. You think he loves you, but bitterly will you rue the mistake at some future day. He is wholly unworthy of you. You know nothing of him; and it is astonishing to me how your mother and Mr. Russell could ever allow a man of his description to obtain such a familiar footing among you. He is playing a double part; and if I had a brother's right to call him to account, he should atone for his conduct, or—I would blow his brains out!"

"Lewis! Lewis! this is dreadful!" cried Rosina, terrified at a threat which would highly have amused Dr. Penning-

ton. "I could not have believed you capable of such vindictive jealousy. Not half an hour ago, Mr. Huntley was warmly praising you, who speak of him so unjustly. Let us say no more of this—the subject had better be at rest between us."

Lewis moodily obeyed, and walked at her side in perfect silence. At length, after full ten minutes' endurance, he exclaimed, "I can bear this no longer! Rosina, I must leave you. After what has passed, how can we,—or at least, how can I speak, look, or move, in the presence of those people, with tolerable composure? *You* must necessarily wish for my absence. The Goods and your sister are resting on that stile at the foot of the hill. Will you dispense with my escort for so short a distance?"

"Willingly,—gladly," said Rosina,

"Farewell then," returned he hastily, "tell them I have a headache, heartache, what you will. To be forced to sit laughing and talking nonsense among a set of thoughtless boisterous people, when one's heart is full of bitterness,—in the presence of a rival, too!—would be intolerable. Farewell."

She thought, at that moment, of the instant when the waters had closed over her at Mrs. Shivers's.

"Lewis!" said she, falteringly.

"Ha!—what, Rosina?" cried Lewis with eagerness.

"I only wished to say that, if I have spoken more unkindly than the occasion required, I hope you will forgive me—and that I shall never forget the day at the Pleasance—and—"

"And what?"

"Pray, Lewis, say nothing to my mother of what has passed."

"Is that all?" said he, with a look of disappointment.

"You may depend upon me. Farewell."

In a moment he was gone. Luckily there was no water to put him in mind of making a short end to his woes as he walked home. The partridges sprang whirring from beneath his feet as he returned through the cornfields; but no pleasing associations with pointers and Joe Mantons did they awaken in his gloomy mind. He reached the vicarage, and shut himself up in his bed-room.

As for the author of his misery, she waited till his retreating footsteps could no longer be heard; and then, when all the weeping of Niobe could not have brought him back, she burst into tears.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE.

WHETHER Rosina's tears originated in a little remorse, a little repentance, a little love, a little agitation at the unequivocal nature of Lewis's language, or a little unsteadiness of spirits occasioned by the heat, the fatigue of walking, and a mixture of all the above mentioned emotions together, it may be difficult to determine ; but as no time could be worse chosen for weeping than the epoch of a *fête champêtre*, her eyes were speedily dried, and she walked forward without casting "one lingering look behind." The space which she had to traverse before reaching her sister and the Goods might be about half a quarter of a mile ; which, let her pace it as leisurely as she might allowed no great time for composing the perturbation of her looks and feelings. "If I could but follow Lewis's example," thought she as she wiped away her tears, "and run home ! But that would never do—Hannah would be frightened ; and what would the Goods, and the Hollands, and the Browns, and Mr. Huntley think ?—Ten to one, they would guess the truth, and I should never hear the end of it. My mother, too, would find all out immediately. After all, why should I be the least concerned about what has passed ? Lewis has behaved very ill. I will go through with it with spirit."

In pursuance of this noble resolution, Rosina walked on, trusting that the open air would destroy the traces of her tears, but, to avoid all danger, holding her parasol between herself and Mr. Good, though the sun shone in an opposite direction.

"Heyday, Rosina !" shouted Mr. Good as soon as she came within hail, "what have you done with your beau?"

Rosina did not think it necessary to scream in return, but as soon as she arrived within speaking distance, she replied with tolerable carelessness, "Lewis said he had a bad headache, which would make the noise and gaiety of the party too much for him, so he went home."

"Upon my word ! The oddest thing I ever heard of in my life, to leave a young lady to find her own way through a wood ! It does not speak very highly of Mr. Pennington's politeness. I hope this headache is not a mere sham, to cover something worse."

"I thought Lewis seemed unwell before we set out," said

Hannah ; " he looked flushed, and spoke more hurriedly than usual."

" So he did," said Mrs. Good. " Oh, he would hardly have left Rosina in this abrupt way if he had not really felt unwell. Nothing is more unpleasant than a sick headache when one is expected to be merry and talkative."

" Well," said Mr. Good, " we must not loiter here any longer at all events, or we shall arrive at the fag end of the dinner, and I am one of those who love 'the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast.' "

He offered his arm to his wife as he spoke, and the two sisters followed together. Hannah had detected the traces of emotion on Rosina's countenance, but she forbore at present, to make any inquiry. It struck her that she and Lewis had most likely had a little quarrel, and she was sorry for it, but doubted not that all would be set right again at their next meeting. Hannah had long been only able to guess at what passed in her sister's mind, and she had little suspicion of its being wholly occupied by thoughts of Mr. Huntley.

Mrs. Good, whose figure was rather more than embonpoint, began to complain of the heat.

" My dear," said her husband, " for your comfort, there are some good, substantial-looking clouds coming up in the south, which exceedingly remind me of my first water-colour piece when I was a school-boy—' Storm coming on'—My stars ! if it should rain !—What will become of your new bonnet ?"

" Don't put disagreeable thoughts into my head, my dear," returned Mrs. Good, gaily. " When the rain actually comes, it will be time enough to think of my bonnet."

" You are quickening your pace, however, on the strength of my suggestion. So, Rosina, you have been to Mrs. Shivers's, I hear, since you were at our house, and had a delightful day. Hannah has been telling us all about it. You had an adventure too ; were soused into the water, and a young gentleman jumped in after you. All this was mighty pleasant and romantic. It was lucky, however, that neither of you caught cold."

" I did take cold," said Rosina, " and only left my room this morning."

" Then I think your mother did not shew her usual prudence in sending you out to dine on the grass. However, your cold was not very bad, I'll answer for it, or you would have sent for me. Whirr ! There go the partridges ! I

shall try to have a day's shooting this week. Is your young cousin—your Mr. Pennington much of a shot?"

"No, I think not," said Rosina, absently.

"No, he never shoots," said Hannah. "Mr. Pakenham was laughing at him for it, on Monday evening, and calling him a *Humanitarian*. I thought few young men would have borne railly with so much steadiness and good humour."

"He could bear to be shot at then, it seems," observed Mr. Good, "and by the sharpest of weapons, the poisoned arrow of irony. Well; I like the young man the better for it—it speaks well for him—it is what few are equal to; though as to not shooting, on the score of its being a cruel amusement, that's all nonsense. Nobody thinks any thing of it."

"Lewis would tell you," returned Hannah, "that people choose not to think of it, because, if they did, they must confess that it is a cruel amusement."

"Then he would talk nonsense," said Mr. Good. "Those kind of speeches make a young fellow appear very pragmatical. If Mr. Pennington chooses to run counter to established customs, he should be contented to indulge his own whims, without wanting to engrast them on other people. All that over-refinement, and making one's self out to be better than any body else, has a very priggish tendency; and I don't like a fine young man, such as Mr. Pennington, to be a prig."

Mrs. Good warmly defended Lewis from any taint of priggishness, and, before the subject was exhausted, they reached the rendezvous, where the elder Miss Hollands were busily unpacking the baskets, and settling precedence between lamb and chicken, while Phœbe and Jemima Brown were flirting with Huntley. Lewis was not missed till on sitting down to their pic-nic, Miss Holland exclaimed, "where is Mr. Pennington?"

"Dear, yes! where is he?" echoed Miss Phœbe. "I declare we had quite forgotten him."

"He has made off, ladies," said Mr. Good, "without saying with your leave or by your leave—gone home in a fit of the sulks, or with a sick headache, whichever the case may be."

"Cool!" said Huntley.

"Cool? I never heard any thing so odd!" cried Miss Phœbe, "so rude, I may say! Extremely tiresome, when we have so few gentlemen."

"Oh, *you* can't pretend to miss him much, at any rate, as you owned just now you had quite forgotten him."

"Only, what with one sending an excuse, and another not coming, and another turning back, the party is quite broken up."

"And after setting out with us and all!" chimed in Miss Jemima Brown; "young men give themselves such airs now!"

"So they did in my time," said Mr. Good; "I don't think they are a bit altered."

"Well, I think they are," said Miss Holland; "however, I dare say we shall do vastly well without Mr. Pennington."

"Dear, yes! we're quite independent of him," said Miss Phoebe, bridling. "I only wish we had asked Mr. Sam Good, instead. *He* always sets something pleasant going."

"And is not too fine for his company," added Miss Margaret.

"No indeed. If there's anything I dislike, it's haughtiness, and what you call capriciousness,—caprice."

If these are the delights of a *fête champêtre*, thought Rosina, one may almost as well dine indoors as on the grass.

Huntley had been playing with the young Goods, and chasing them over the heath. He now ran off in his turn, followed by the children in full cry, and instead of returning to his old quarters, took refuge between the Miss Wellfords, the youngest of whom smiled complacently at the manœuvre.

"Mine was a fatiguing walk, this morning," whispered he to Rosina. "If you knew what hard work it is to play *cabalist' servante* to five plain women at once! I shall take care to avoid such a scrape again."

Then, turning to Hannah, "What a pretty spot this is," said he, "for a *fête champêtre*! We want nothing but a guitar, some floating drapery twined through those trees, cloaks, feathered caps, and moustachios for Mr. Good and myself, and ball-dresses for the ladies, to render the whole group fit for Stothard."

"To this it might be objected," said Hannah, with a smile, "that the drapery would be utterly useless, that nobody could play on the guitar, that in ball-dresses we should infallibly catch cold, and that Mr. Good's cheerful countenance, quite in keeping with his blue coat and beaver hat, would be completely out of character with a Spanish hat and feathers."

"You do not object to *my* donning the cap and cloak, I perceive, at any rate. And how do you know that I cannot play the guitar? I *can*, I assure you. I have been a scholar of Bertolini's."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Rosina.

Huntley smiled. "If you should hear a guitar tinkling beneath your window, some night," said he, "be sure not to suspect *me* of being the serenader."

"But indeed I shall!" she returned. "A serenade!" repeated she to herself, "how romantic!—how delightful!"

"I cannot tell," resumed Huntley to Hannah, in a lowered tone, "what makes me in such high spirits to-day! I seem at the summit of felicity—every thing wears a smile to me." Not every *body*, though, thought he, as he caught a pouting look from Miss Phoebe.

"Fine weather often makes us feel happy without our knowing why," said Hannah: "at least, it often has that effect on me. How pleasant it is to sit here in the shade, looking at the sunshine."

"Contrast, contrast,—the grand principle of enjoyment. In the shade we look for sunshine; in the parched desert, the traveller looks towards the oasis. As retirement to the statesman, so is the gaiety of London to the retired man. Did you never consider how much of our happiness depends upon contrast?"

"I think that health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, wonderfully relieve each other."

"You use the word *relieve* in a painter's sense," said Huntley, smiling with pleasure. "I will tell you where one powerfully feels the effect of contrast:—at Somerset House. Amid the heat, glare, and crowding of the exhibition, I have gazed with inexpressible delight on some rural landscape, which has transported me in imagination from the fashionable flutter around. I have longed to breathe the cooler air, and inhale the fragrant scents that have seemed to belong to the miniature prospect. But, sitting at our ease on some bank or rustic bench, and enjoying the variety of rural sounds around us, we are apt to fancy it is their comparative stillness, whereas it is the sense they imperceptibly convey of life and activity, which interests the mind. The twittering of busy birds, the hum of industrious bees, the running to and fro of ants, the milkmaid's call, and the mower's scythe, all bring our own luxurious idleness in pleasant contrast with others' employment."

"The salt, Mr. Huntley, if you please," said Miss Brown, in a tone which shewed that the contrast of his own idleness with others' employment was not quite pleasant to every one!

"May I have the pleasure of taking wine with you, Miss Brown?" said he, anxious to re-establish his falling character.

"You are making nothing of a dinner, Hannah," said Mr. Good. "For my part, I declare that this brisk air makes me eat

'As though excess of appetite did grow
By what it fed on.'

"I am uncommonly fond of these rustic parties," said Miss Jemima Brown, sentimentally, "they always put me in mind of Shakspeare's 'As You Like It.'

"What, where Orlando comes in at dinner time with his sword drawn, and bids the company 'forbear and eat no more?'" said Huntley.

"Unpleasant that," said Mr. Good, taking another slice of tongue.

"It was very pretty, though, to see the duke and his court dining under the trees," said Jemima.

"Bless me, Miss Jemima, did you live in Ardennes forest in *those times*?"

"La! Mr. Good, you know I mean, at a play."

"Oh! pasteboard trees, were they? Well, every one to their taste, but I must say that there is nothing at which I less like mere looking on, than a dinner."

"I wonder if we shall have any company at Hexley, this season," said Miss Holland.

"I hope we shall," cried Tom Good, "for papa has promised we shall go, the next time there is a play."

"Have you usually a good company?" inquired Huntley.

"Pretty fair," said Mr. Good. "I am a great friend to Thespis, and usually give the theatre the benefit of my patronage. The poor wretches are miserably fitted out, and are obliged to be actors of all work. I often see the same coat figure in tragedy, interlude, and farce in the course of one night; and a mock ermine boa which has begun the evening as a trimming to Lady Macbeth's royal robe, has next made its appearance on the dress of a Russian countess in Love in Wrinkles, and finally encircled the neck of our Catalani."

"Alias, Mrs. Hodgkinson," said Mrs. Good.

"Tell me not of Mrs. Hodgkinson—to me they are Catalani, Braham, Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons. I like the spirit of good nature which prevails in our little company and which makes them willing to share all things in common. That boa is actually the property of our Miss O'Neill. The

sociability of these two actresses might put some greater stars to the blush."

"It is beginning to rain, I declare!" cried Jemima Brown in alarm, "I felt a great drop fall on my face."

"Alas! my wife's bonnet!" cried Mr. Good. "I laid her a wager it would be spoilt the first time she wore it. My dear, I sympathize with your feelings. Yes, the sky looks very threatening—you ladies had better get under cover. Hannah, why did you insult us by coming in a gown that would not spoil? Malicious girl! you will do nothing but laugh at the uneasiness of others. Never mind the dirty tablecloth, Fanny—Let it lie—

'Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow?"

"Your quotations from Shakspeare, Mr. Good, are certainly felicitous," said Huntley laughing.

The rain now commenced what Miss Brown termed "a regular pepper," and the ladies hastily scuttled beneath the shelter afforded by a few large trees, where, by means of shawls and umbrellas, they succeeded in securing their dresses from injury. Some little time and trouble, however, were expended in their arrangements, and a few little peeps at temper were afforded to the keen young artist.

"I declare my silk slippers will be spoilt for ever and ever," said Miss Brown.

"I told you how it would be, Harriet," said Jemima.

"There, don't put me in mind of it now. What's done, can't be undone."

"No, but some people will never be the better for experience. If this should bring on one of your attacks on the chest, now, you'll be sorry for it!"

"You have snugly housed yourselves, indeed!" said Mr. Good, rubbing his hands as he approached, and looking as merry as if nothing were the matter. "This is a famous firm dry bank, and I don't think the rain will penetrate the leaves. We will 'sit upon the ground and tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.' Come, Tom! you shall begin."

"The death of a king, papa?" said Tom with simplicity. "Will William Rufus do?"

"Extremely well, my boy," said his father, laughing. Tom told his tale roundly, and was rewarded by the ladies'

praises of his memory. Emboldened by the encouragement he had received, he pulled Mr. Huntley by the arm. "It's your turn, now," said he.

"With all my heart," said Huntley, always ready to answer an unexpected draft on his imagination. "How must I begin? In the old-fashioned way, 'once upon a time'? Did you ever hear of King Harold?"

"I should think so," said Tom proudly.

"Then 'listen, lords and ladies gay,' for I am going to tell you a very moving story."

Huntley remembered the tradition, which related that Harold did not die on the field of Hastings, but was found, the night after the battle, by his wife and a friar, who recovered him from his swoon and conveyed him to a hermitage where he remained concealed for many years. Huntley worked up these circumstances, which he imagined Harold to divulge on his dying bed to William the Conqueror, in a very striking manner. It was just such a tale as might have been admitted into one of our fashionable annuals, and it was received with exclamations of "beautiful—delightful—excessively pretty—very."

"None of us can hope to invent any thing like that, I am sure," said Mrs. Good.

"No, indeed," said Rosina.

"Oh! do let us try," cried Phœbe Holland. "It is a capital amusement, and Mr. Good was very clever to set it going."

"Nay, the merit of doing that, lies with Tom," said he, "but pray carry it on, ladies."

"It is your turn now, Miss Phœbe," said Huntley mischievously.

"Mine! Oh! I'm sure I shall never be able to think of any thing. It's so long since I read any thing about kings. Not since I was at school, I'm sure. Dear me! let me see.—Would the story of King Charles in the oak do?"

"As King Charles did not *die* in the oak, it certainly will not," said Mr. Good.

"Ah, true. Well, I'm sure I can't recollect how he died—in his bed, I suppose—Oh, yes—King Charles the First, Second, I mean, died in his bed, at an advanced age, in spite of the efforts of his friends and physicians; and was deeply lamented by his subjects, young and old—" ("especially the Puritans," muttered Huntley.)—"Who, though they

knew they might have had a better king, thought they should most likely have a worse."

"Very good!" said Miss Jemima.

"There! I have told my story," said Phœbe, looking round for applause, "and I hope you all like it."

"Excellent, admirable!" said Huntley, "we can only lament that it should be so very concise."

"Oh dear, I am nothing of an *ing*provisator, or whatever you call it! So now, Mr. Good, I call upon upon you."

"Oh, you and Mr. Huntley have quite put me in the dumps, replied he.

"Mr. Russell should have been here to help us," said Huntley to Hannah. She smiled assent.

"After all," said Miss Margaret Holland, "it is not much of a game. We can only tell things, you know, that may be better read in books, and we are not quite such children as to like stories. If we had thought, now of bringing a pack of cards—"

"—We might just as well have remained in the Grange parlour," said Mr. Good.

"Why yes, so we might; and as it has turned out, that would have been the best plan after all—only we should not have had a *fête champêtre*."

"I wish I had a sham pate," said Mr. Good, "for this is a vile draughty corner I have chosen, and I believe I have caught a cold in my head already."

Fanny Good joyfully announced that the rain had ceased; and after waiting till the drippings from the leaves had a little subsided, it was unanimously agreed that they should pick their way back to the Grange as well as they could. During the last half hour, Huntley had been paying Hannah more unequivocal attention than he had ever ventured to do before; and now that she walked homewards between Phœbe Holland and Miss Rosina, he fluttered round the party, and in the absence of other beaux, laughed and talked as much nonsense as any three might have done. He was, as he himself observed, in unusually high spirits; and Mrs. Wellford's absence, and the approachableness inseparable from an out of doors' party, gave a lively freedom to his looks and language, which, in proportion as he advanced, made Hannah retreat. She had never felt any thing particular in his manner to her before, and in the course of this afternoon, was once or twice rendered uncomfortable by it. Rosina was not wholly without dissatisfaction: Huntley found so

much to say to every body, that no one, and she least of all, could complain of neglect, yet she would have wished his attentions not quite so general. On reaching the Grange, they found that Mrs. Wellford had sent them dry shoes, umbrellas, and shawls; and Hannah, quitting Huntley and Phœbe Holland, came towards Rosina with a painful blush, and asked her whether they might not as well go home at once.

"Why?" inquired Rosina, who was stooping to tie her sandal, and consequently did not perceive Hannah's uneasiness.

"We are very wet,—and your cold may be made worse, you know. I think we might as well go."

"We *have* been wet, you mean; we are not wet now—and my cold is quite gone. Oh, I think we had better stay—it will seem so odd to go before tea."

"Very well," said Hannah, who thought it *might* seem odd, and also dreaded Mr. Huntley's offering to escort them home. The Miss Browns' brother, Richard, who had been expected the night before, had arrived at the Grange in their absence, and Matthew was coming to tea. He presently entered, with his crony Sam Good.

"I thought Pennington would be here," said he to Rosina, after looking round the room.

"He was here in the morning—he went home with a headache."

"Did he? If I had known that, I would have looked in on him—I would rather have spent a quiet half hour with him than have come into this noise and bustle, for I feel rather stupid this evening myself. What an uproar the Miss Browns are making with Mr. Huntley. Did you have any champagne to-day? Every body seems in tip-top spirits."

"I am sure I am not."

"No, you look pale and tired. Ten to one you have increased your cold by getting very warm with walking in the sun in the first place, and then sitting on wet grass or standing under a tree, where there is always sure to be a draught. Enough to give half of the party rheumatic fevers."

"Don't put such shocking things into my head."

"Well, I hope nothing will come of it. How dumpy I feel this evening! Mr. Huntley is flirting with Hannah now. I suppose he'll make the tour of the room. I don't think so much of his manners, now I have seen Lewis Pennington.

Huntley is a man of the world, but Lewis is a man of birth and breeding. Good heavens! what a laugh Harriet Brown has! Not much breeding to spare in that quarter, I think. People may come from London, and yet not abound in gentility. I wonder whereabouts that Bloomsbury is, they are always talking of. A good way from the west end, I should fancy."

"Why, Matthew, what makes you so bitter to-night?"

"Am I bitter? Well then to please you, I'll try to be sweet. What a sweet turban Miss Holland has on!"

"You ought to offer your services to her at the tea-table."

"No, no, there are men enough to do that, without me. I shall pretend not to see I am wanted. We are such a large party that there are not enough chairs, and if I were to leave my place, Mr. Huntley would whip it up before I could say Jack Robinson! He has been shifting from one foot to another these ten minutes."

"I dare say he is tired with his walk."

"His walk! what a walk! Not half so far as I have been to-day. All over to Hundleford on foot, and nobody at home when I got there. If that was not enough to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!—"

"What are you laughing at, Rosina?"

"I have found out what makes you so surly."

"I surly?" said Matthew, colouring. "If I am surly, it is because I am tired and vexed with walking five miles in the sun, and five miles back again in the rain, and all for nothing. There! I have caught Miss Holland's eye now! She beckons to me. I must go! What a pity, when you and I were so pleasantly talking off our weariness to each other!"

Matthew lost his place, as he had anticipated, and Rosina seemed marvellously resigned to the change in her companions. A noisy tea was succeeded by a more noisy game of forfeits, ostensibly for the sake of the young Goods, though it was carried on with equal spirit by many of the grown up members of the party. Farmer Holland loved to promote merriment, and Huntley and Rosina delighted him by the liveliness with which they kept up the game. Towards nine o'clock, Matthew Wellford found himself walking home between his sisters.

"Well Rosina," said he, "I hope you and Mr. Huntley have been talking nonsense to each other's satisfaction."

"Now, Matthew, don't be ill-humoured. People do not

come out to make themselves disagreeable to their hosts and hostesses, do they?"

"Why, no—only I think there was rather too much of it to-night."

"Of what?"

"Of noise, and flirting, and romping."

"Romping! oh, Matthew!"

"I don't know what else you could call Phœbe Holland's running off with Mr. Huntley's hat, and his running after her."

"Oh, *there* I agree with you. I thought you were alluding to me."

"And even you—" began Matthew.

"And even then," said Rosina, appearing not to hear him, "it was Phœbe Holland's fault, and poor Mr. Huntley ran after his hat very unwillingly."

"It is my opinion," said Matthew, abruptly, "that grown people ought never to play at children's games. They are sure to go too far, or else look awkward, as Hannah did to-night, when it was her turn to forfeit. Their mirth can never be like the mirth of children. Ignorance of decorum and wilful forgetfulness of it are two very different things."

"Very different," repeated Hannah.

"And I am sure, you, Hannah, wished more than once that my mother had been of the party."

"Well," said Rosina, with a sigh, "altogether it has been a pleasant day."

"I should not have thought a rainy *féte champêtre* could have been very delightful."

"Oh! but my dear Matthew, the rain did not begin till dinner was quite over, and even then, we amused ourselves very well under the trees."

"How?"

"By telling stories. Mr. Huntley invented a most beautiful tale—"

"Pshaw!"

"Quite on the spur of the moment, Matthew!"

"Pshaw!"

"And what do you think! He plays the guitar!"

"Pshaw!" repeated he with tenfold emphasis. "That has lowered him ten per cent in my opinion. How ridiculous, how contemptible, for a man, an Englishman to play on a guitar! I would as soon play on a penny whistle!"

Rosina was too much hurt to reply, and they reached their

garden-gate in silence. Hannah and Matthew then exchanged a cordial farewell.

"Good night, Matthew," said Rosina coldly.

"Good night, Rosina," replied he, taking hold of the edge of her bonnet, and obliging her to turn her head to yield a reluctant kiss. "I am sorry I have vexed you by my grumbling, which I did not begin in earnest. Come, Rosy, you and I won't quarrel, shall we?"

"No, indeed, Matthew," replied she, entirely relenting.

"That's right," he replied; "my mother is in bed I dare say, so I shall not go in again. Good night."

The girls entered the garden. Both were glad to find themselves at home. Hannah had had some pleasure, but with considerable alloy. Huntley's conduct had distressed her; Lewis's absence had made her uneasy; added to this, was the consciousness that her mother was unwell at home, and the fear that Rosina might suffer from the change of weather. As for Rosina, her head ached tormentingly; she was tired, feverish, and half exulting, half unhappy. She felt elation and yet remorse at having refused Lewis; afraid of its coming to the knowledge of her mother and sister, and of their reproaches. Come what might, she thought she could never suffer too much for Huntley, and yet his conduct this evening had been very equivocal, and filled her with a vague, uneasy sentiment of jealousy. Wearied by the noisy gaiety at Farmer Holland's, she longed for silence and darkness, that she might think over all that had happened and might happen.

Mrs. Wellford had sat up for her daughters; and had the satisfaction of telling them that her head-ache had left her. "Have you had a pleasant day, my dears," said she.

"Very pleasant, mamma," replied they both, in an accent of resignation.

"I have not been without visitors. Lewis has been here."

"Indeed," said Rosina, colouring with alarm.

"Yes; he told me the reason of his quitting you so abruptly. Poor fellow! I was well disposed to pity him when I was suffering, myself. He was evidently feverish and far from well. I fear he caught cold that day at the Pleasance."

"I am sure I hope not," ejaculated Rosina as she lighted her bed candle.

"So he is going, to-morrow, it seems."

"Going!" exclaimed Hannah.

"Yes; did not he mention it to either of you?"

"Not to me."

"Nor to me."

"Well, that is strange. He really appeared quite moved when he wished me good b'ye; but I told him I took it for granted we should see him to-morrow before he started."

"Well, I am surprised at his leaving us so soon," said Hannah.

Rosina could not say that she was. It was easy to gather from what had passed, that Lewis had not betrayed the reason of his quitting the gipsy party. Mrs. Wellford appeared wholly free from suspicion. After talking over the events of the day for a short time, they wished their mother good night. The sisters undressed in silence. At length, just as Rosina was preparing to lie down on her pillow, Hannah said earnestly,

"Dear Rosina, just tell me *one* thing. Did Lewis—"

"Oh! don't keep me awake by talking of Lewis," cried Rosina impatiently, "my head aches to distraction, and I am dying for want of sleep."

Hannah was silenced, and after meditating on the little she knew of what had passed, yielded to slumbers as sweet and tranquil as her own disposition; while Rosina remained to toss on her pillow, and vainly seek refuge from her disquieting reflections.

CHAPTER XX.

MEDITATIONS AND VEXATIONS.

WHEN Rosina awoke the next morning, she remembered having settled just before she had fallen asleep, that if her heart had not been pre-engaged by Mr. Huntley, it would have been impossible to have withheld it from Lewis Pennington. She had thought over every syllable that had been uttered, and had been forced to acquit Lewis of any unjustifiable bitterness of language; nay, she went back to the evening at Mrs. Good's, and thence to the whole of Lewis's stay at Summerfield, and she felt that however she might resent his charging her with coquetry, it was not undeserved. If she had been convinced from the first, that she could not re-

turn his affection, she ought to have avoided a thousand opportunities of which she had availed herself, of perplexing and teasing him. The fact was she had been vain of her power; she had delighted in riveting his chains, without considering or caring how much this paltry pleasure was counterbalanced by the uneasiness of an honest and warm-hearted young man. Now, the last proof of his affection had been given; the offer had been made; and strange to say, the prerogative of refusal had occasioned more compunction than satisfaction. To balance the knowledge of having wounded a very feeling heart, could be set no village gossip, no wonder and envy of female friends. Lewis had promised to keep the secret; and there was nothing she more dreaded than its being surmised or divulged. Rosina sighed. Hannah slept, though the early sunbeams streamed through the white curtains: she therefore softly rose from her sister's side, dressed herself noiselessly, and went down-stairs. Leaving Betty, with her broom and tea leaves, in undisputed possession of the parlour, she entered the garden.

It was usually Rosina's custom to pay a visit to her flowers before breakfast. This was well known to Lewis, who had occasionally strolled down the lane, as if by accident, to have the opportunity of exchanging an early good-morrow with her. Perhaps as she now bent over her roses and pinks, she was half expecting, half wishing that he might steal down the lane, to give her an opportunity of speaking and looking kindly before they parted for ever. As if in echo to her thoughts, a quick step was heard behind the hedge. Rosina's heart beat fast; the garden latch was raised, and she dared not look up, though she heard some one approaching. Bending over her flower border, she affected not to hear the quick breathing of the intruder, who was either much agitated or grievously out of breath, though her crimson cheeks betrayed her consciousness.

Alas! how much artifice was wasted! Mr. Russell's foot-boy, hight Joseph Gibbs, unceremoniously dispelled all illusion by saying "a letter, Miss;"—touched his hat, and was gone. Rosina felt a pang of disappointment; she recognized Lewis's hand writing, and hastening to the most sheltered part of the garden, she tore open the letter, and read as follows:—

"If there had been the slightest word, look, or action of
your's Rosina, during our yesterday's conversation, on which

I could, upon reflection, build any hope, I would not **now** leave Summerfield; but I can recall none. **I** was hurried away by passion; **you** were angry with me, but still if **you** had felt any latent emotion of tenderness towards me, **you** would have betrayed some relenting, some disposition to bear with my waywardness, and to set matters right between **us**. There was nothing of this kind. Your assertion that **you** could not return my affection was uncontradicted by **your** look and tone. Be it so then. Heaven knows in what a delusion I have been living during the last month;—but it must have been of my own creating. I suppose I came to Summerfield convinced that such a wondrous fine fellow as **myself** must necessarily carry all before him. Certainly, I little thought of rival, and never dreamt of the possibility of **your** affections being pre-engaged. I am now no longer deluded or unjust. I no longer accuse **you** of coquetry. As **you** truly said yesterday, our affections are not in our own power. —I feel that they are not. A mist seems to clear from before my eyes, and I see that from the very first evening of my arrival here, **you** preferred Huntley. I believe that **you** had and have some kindness of feeling towards your old playmate and cousin; and to this I now ascribe all the looks and words, which, at the time, I attributed to a warmer interest. Give me credit for this candour, Rosina—a sleepless night has been spent in attaining it. To be equally willing to allow the blamelessness of **another**, is out of the question. No, I cannot think of him with temper. I believe he is deceiving **you**: beware, therefore, dear Rosina, lest **you** lean too strongly on a broken reed; be very cautious, lest **you** should awake to all the anguish of disappointment. Even supposing him to be sincere, I cannot consider him worthy of **you**. Neither am **I**, it may be said: there is some difference, however, between **us**, in birth, connections, and education. No matter—these may not be indispensable points: therefore, I breathe my wishes for **your** happiness—**your mutual** happiness. In accordance with **your** request, I have kept our secret; though I had to stand rather a severe cross-examination from Mr. Russell. Perhaps—

“ Oh! how hard it is to preserve this cold, unimpassioned style!—In another half-hour I shall leave this place, which, in spite of what has passed between **us**, will always be dear to my memory. I know **your** mother will think it strange that **I** quit Summerfield without again seeing **her**; but I could not meet **you** without hazarding my self-command; and rather

than give you pain or incur your displeasure, I prefer being accused of want of politeness. I *cannot* as yet return to my happy home. I shall go on to Chedworth, where an old tutor of mine lives, who is, at present, very ill. There, I shall probably overcome the first anguish of my disappointment; and then,—not *till* then,—prepare to meet the inquiries and penetrating eyes of my father and mother. The last month has been spent in a manner worse than useless: active exertion is what I owe to others and myself, and will prove my best medicine. Once more farewell.

“LEWIS PENNINGTON.”

Rosina’s tears fell over this letter. “He does me more than justice,” said she to herself; “I have not been as free from coquetry as he allows. Ah! warm and impetuous as he always is, vexed as he was yesterday, what must it have cost him to acquire this temperate tone! He wishes his rival may be happy; he dares not return to his beloved home—Generous Lewis!”

With a heavy sigh, Rosina folded up the letter, postponing its re-perusal till she was secure of meeting with no interruption. She paced the garden endeavouring to recover her tranquillity, till Hannah summoned her to breakfast.

The day was bleak and cloudy. After breakfast, Rosina brought out her drawing materials, and began to use them rather listlessly. Since Huntley had been engrossed by his own picture he had had little time to spare for giving her instruction, and, deprived of this exciting motive for perseverance, Rosina’s diligence had sensibly slackened. Her mother did not, indeed, derive much benefit from this circumstance. Rosina gave her as little assistance in needlework and household cares as when her drawing-lessons first began to engross all her mornings; neither had she lately made any progress in books of improvement. Much of her leisure was spent before the looking-glass; at other times, she read in a desultory manner, frittered away half hours and hours in fancy-work that might be conveniently taken up when visitors were by, or idly sat over her drawing-book, pencil in hand, wondering in what sort of a house Mr. Huntley lived, and how she should like London and what she should be thought of, if it should ever be her fate to be established there. Dinner parties, *soirées*, silk pelisses, new furniture, gay acquaintance, the opera, the theatres, Hyde-Park, flitted before her eyes. Miss Rosina

Wellford was in a fair way of being spoiled. Nothing but a little adversity had much chance of saving her.

Huntley called just as Rosina had set out her colours, to request she would allow him to finish her picture. She was just in the humour to accede, and quickly removed her desk and portfolio. It was too cold for sitting out of doors, and several arrangements were necessary in order to make room for Huntley's apparatus. Every thing at length was settled to his mind; and while engaged in laying his pallet, he talked over the *fête champêtre*. Mrs. Wellford had only had a matter-of-fact account from Hannah, and bits and snatches from Rosina; consequently Huntley's lively sketch combined novelty with amusement. Hannah had no want of deference to complain of to-day. The earnest admirer had sunk into the industrious artist; and no sooner was the pallet laid, than grasping the rest-stick and brushes as Jove might seize his thunderbolts, he plunged into his task, and never broke silence except to reiterate his request that Rosina would turn her head a little more to the right. Thus, with her eyes averted from the easel and nothing to divert her mind, her thoughts, whether she would or no, followed Lewis gloomily riding to Chedworth.

Huntley had lately seldom pursued his work with such freedom from interruption, and his progress was proportionably rapid. Mrs. Wellford was called off from watching his brush, and unwillingly quitted the easel, leaving Hannah occupied as she had recently been herself.

"How the finishing touches *tell*, Miss Wellford!" said Huntley.

"Yes, indeed," said Hannah. "You put touch on touch where I can see no need for them, and the result is perfect magic."

"It is the '*poco più*'—the *little more*," replied Huntley, "which enables connoisseurs to detect the difference between an original and a copy. Vulgar eyes cannot perceive the fine touches which give the living spirit to the whole, and vulgar hands cannot execute them. There! I think I have finished my work for this morning. Stay—there is a light catching the hair, which I have not yet touched in. Observe," continued he with animation, "how beautifully the sun falls on that dark chesnut braid, making it absolutely glitter in its brightness!" Rosina's heart beat with the idea that he was admiring *her*, whereas he was only admiring the effect. "I have

caught it!" said he. "Come, Miss Rosina, and see how Orpah starts from the pannel."

Hannah was called from the room by her mother. Huntley sat down to re-touch a fold of the drapery, and bent earnestly over his work, while Rosina's hand rested on the back of his chair. "There!" exclaimed he, looking up triumphantly, as his brush produced an unexpected effect, "What do you think of that?"

At this moment, Mr. Russell entered, and Rosina thought she had never seen him look so cross. His brow was clouded, and his countenance had lost its usual benevolent smile. Huntley shook him by the hand with friendly warmth, but Mr. Russell greeted him coldly, and stood for a minute looking at the picture, though it did not seem to fix his admiration or even attention. "I suppose it is nearly finished, is it not?" said he.

What can make Mr. Russell so ill-humoured? thought Rosina. Can my refusal of Lewis—? But she remembered that Lewis had kept her secret; and she then supposed that he must have been displeased at seeing her leaning on the back of Mr. Huntley's chair. Can he be jealous? surely not, thought she; yet Rosina was beginning to be very credulous of her own omnipotence.

Mrs. Wellford and Hannah almost immediately followed Mr. Russell into the parlour.

"How is Lewis?" inquired Mrs. Wellford.

"Lewis is gone," replied Mr. Russell.

"Gone!" repeated Mrs. Wellford, Hannah, and Huntley.

"Yes," said he, gravely, "his departure was sudden." Rosina thought that his eye fell on her.

"I knew he was going to leave Summerfield," said Mrs. Wellford, rather hurt, "but I certainly expected he would call to take leave of us. I told him as much yesterday evening."

"He commissioned me with his apologies," said Mr. Russell.

"Rather abrupt this," said Huntley, turning suddenly towards Rosina, with a smile. She blushed like crimson. Immediately the truth, or something like the truth, flashed on Huntley's mind.

"Very strange indeed," repeated Mrs. Wellford. "I should not have expected this of Lewis—so much as he has been with us."

"Appearances are against him, I must confess," said Mr.

Russell ; " but I can assure you that nothing was farther from his wish than that you should think him unpolite or ungrateful."

" Unpolite ! Politeness has never been a question between his family and mine," said Mrs. Wellford, still evidently hurt. " I had thought we had been on a more friendly footing than that of mere politeness."

" Well—you must demand an *éclaircissement* from him the next time you see him, and in the mean while, argue, as I do, from his known character, that he had some good reason for his conduct. We can do nothing else—unless any of the present company can enlighten us."

" He will be much missed by you," said Hannah, " as he will by all of us."

" I do not know how you ladies will miss him," returned Mr. Russell drily, " you take these things very philosophically ; but I shall miss him, I assure you ! I never lived under the same roof with a more attachable companion. His lively spirits were accompanied by a certain warmth of feeling which prevented them from ever wearying ; and beneath all that boyish carelessness of manner was more solid sense than some might give him credit for."

A pause succeeded this eulogium, broken by Mr. Russell's resuming with " Had you a pleasant day, yesterday, Rosina ?"

" Very pleasant, extremely pleasant," replied she, colouring.

" I am glad to hear it," said he, though in a voice that did not express much satisfaction. " I should have thought you would hardly have recovered so soon after your narrow escape from drowning."

" Oh, I am none the worse for it," said Rosina, playing with her pencil.

" Have you seen any thing of Mrs. Shivers since ?"

" She sent very politely to inquire after Rosina, the next day," said Mrs. Wellford, " and the servant told us she was quite well."

" Where a lady is in the case," observed Mr. Russell, " there is seldom any lack of inquiries, and concern, and consideration. No servant came to inquire after Lewis."

" That would have been too ridiculous" said Huntley. " We are supposed to be able to shift for ourselves."

" I was glad, though, to find," said Rosina hesitatingly, " that Lewis was not the worse for the accident—"

" How do you know that he was not ? I think he was."

" Do you? Dear me, I am very sorry—"

" Lewis is gone to Chedworth, is he not?" said Hannah.

" Yes—to Mr. Bateman's."

" How long will he be on the road?"

" A day and a half, or perhaps two days."

" Perhaps he may return this way to Stoke Barton."

" No, he means to take the western road."

Huntley, not finding the conversation very enlivening, began to wash his brushes.

" Are you for walking to-day, Huntley?" said Mr. Russell, after another pause.

" With all my heart," said Huntley cheerfully, " if you will wait till I have packed up my tools."

" Well, then, I am your man, for I want a brisk walk and an exciting companion to rouse my lazy spirits this morning."

" I am ready," said Huntley, locking his box, and rapidly removing his easel.

" So am I then," said Mr. Russell, taking up his hat.

" Good morning, Mrs. Wellford; good b'ye, Hannah;—good morning, Rosina."

" They left the room; but Huntley presently returned for one of his gloves. "I fear I shall not have a very lively companion, this morning," muttered he with a smile, as he passed Rosina.

" What in the world can have made Mr. Russell so ill-tempered to-day?" cried she, as soon as the gentlemen were out of hearing. " He was downright cross, surly, and disagreeable."

" Hush, my dear Rosina," returned Hannah gently, " he is only vexed and out of spirits at having unexpectedly lost Lewis."

" Unexpectedly lost Lewis, indeed!" repeated Rosina. " Did the man think he was going to live here all his life?—If he did, he was very foolish, I can tell him!"

This was not destined to be the pleasantest day of Rosina's life. Matthew came in the evening, to drink tea with his mother and sisters. Rosina was alone in the parlour on his entrance. He had scarcely inquired after his mother, when he exclaimed in a vexed tone, " Why, Rosina! Lewis Pennington is gone!"

" Yes, so I find."

" So you find?—How came he to go off so suddenly?"

" I do not know what you call sudden—he was not a fixture here, was he?"

"A fixture? no—but considering he was not limited to time, and that every body in Summerfield had been very civil to him, I should have thought he would have given us a little notice of his intentions, and taken leave of his friends. 'Sow a card, and reap an invitation,' you know, and *vice versa*. I never was more surprised in my life than when he stopped his horse at the gate for a moment this morning, and told me he was on his way to Chedworth. Mrs. Good had not the least idea of his going, and of course, must feel a little hurt at his not calling on her."

Mrs. Wellford now entering, Matthew went over the substance of all he had been saying before.

"If Lewis had taken leave of Mrs. Good," said Mrs. Wellford, "it would be more than he has done to us."

"Well, it is a queer business altogether, mother. *I think* that Rosina, here, could tell us something about it."

"I, Matthew? Pray do not talk such nonsense," cried she, colouring deeply, and seeking, she did not exactly know what, in her work-basket.

"I *do* think so, though, Rosina."

"You think wrong."

"Come, now, Rosy, be candid."

Her mother's eyes were fixed on her, and Matthew's arm was round her waist.

"Pray, Matthew, leave me alone," said she with eyes full of tears, "I cannot bear it." And disengaging herself from him, she left the room.

"What do you think now, mother?" said Matthew.

"I hardly know what to think," said Mrs. Wellford, uneasily. "You had better not renew the subject when she returns; perhaps she will speak candidly to me, if we let her take her own time. Possibly she may have been disappointed in the extent of Lewis's affection. She could hardly expect him to speak openly yet. He may have been afraid of going too far without his father's consent, and resolved to break all off till that was secured. His head-ache yesterday, was very likely brought on by mental uneasiness."

Matthew scrupulously abstained from mentioning Lewis again. Rosina, however, throughout the evening, dreaded the renewal of the subject, and felt fidgety whenever her mother's eyes were upon her. How very pleasant it is to have had an offer!

CHAPTER XXI.

VIOLETS.

A SECOND little rose-coloured note from Miss Pakenham, reminded Rosina of her promised visit, and claimed her as Mrs. Shivers's guest on the following Friday. Engrossed as Rosina's mind was by Huntley, his image had now to hold divided empire with lawns, jaconets, and book-muslins, which rendered her heart not unlike that dissected by the Spectator.

One sitting more was to complete her portrait. On the Saturday of this busy week, Mr. Huntley called at the cottage rather later than was his wont, with a roll of music in his hand, which, after paying his compliments to the ladies, he proceeded to unfold.

"Here are a few songs," said he to Rosina, "which I believe you have never tried—I desired my sister to rummage them out of some old port-folios of mine and to send them down in hopes they might afford you a little amusement."

"How very kind!" said Rosina, colouring and looking towards her mother. Then hastily glancing over the songs,—"Rossini, Cimarosa, Carafa,—how very charming!—A sister, have you, Mr. Huntley? You never mentioned her before—is she young?"

"Yes,—about Miss Wellford's age, I should suppose."

"And her name—"

"Emmeline."

"Emmeline! what a beautiful name! Is she very pretty?"

"Oh,—well enough," said Huntley, carelessly. "Come, will you try this duett, 'Oh, notte soave?' It is very beautiful."

"Will you explain the words to me first, Mr. Huntley? I do not like singing what I do not understand—it is so difficult to give the right expression."

Huntley took up the songs, one after another, and literally translated them. He even wrote down the English words under the Italian with his pencil. "It is a pity you do not study Italian," said he. "It is the sweetest and most feminine language in the world. Besides, Italy boasts so many fine poets, whom you can only imperfectly relish through the medium of translations."

"Oh! I should like to understand it extreraely, but I have neither teacher nor books."

"I principally taught myself," said Huntley, "and if they will be of any service to you or your sister, I shall have pleasure in sending for my Italian books from town."

"I think," said Mrs. Wellford, "Rosina will hardly have leisure or perseverance——"

"Surely, I am not wanting in perseverance?" interrupted Rosina, with a mortified air. "You know, mamma, Miss Pakenham reads Italian; and perhaps, when I am at the Pleasance, she will give me a little instruction. I may not have such another opportunity."

"Are you going from home?" cried Huntley.

"Yes; I am going to Mrs. Shivers's on Friday."

"Huntley's eyes flashed with a momentary expression which was quite inexplicable to Rosina. She tried to fancy it was only surprise, and yet it had seemed like exultation.

"Well, I must try to get on with your sister's picture, and surprise you on your return," said he, unable to prevent a look of complacence from stealing over his features. "The Pleasance is a very beautiful place, is not it? You must take your sketch-book with you, and endeavour to seize some of its finest points of view." After a short silence, he rose and wished good morning, forgetting his proposal to take part in "Oh, notte soave!"

Rosina remained thoughtfully leaning over the songs. "Mr. Huntley did not mean that music to be accepted as a present, did he, Rosina?" said Mrs. Wellford.

"I do not know, mamma," said she, starting. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I should not wish it to be accepted. It would not be right."

"No, certainly not," said Rosina, colouring. "Oh, Mr. Huntley never thought of such a thing. He only meant to lend it."

"You know he said that his sister had found the songs in an old port-folio," said Hannah.

"They look new and clean, however," said Mrs. Wellford.

"Here is one which is soiled," said Rosina. "Oh, we need not doubt his word. Even if he has been so gallant as to buy them and invent the story of the port-folio, we need not be so scrupulous as to institute an inquiry. Surely *that* would be wrong."

"And unnecessary," said Mr. Wellford. "All that I beg is, that the songs may be learned or copied, but not kept."

Rosina instantly looked for some music paper, and the afternoon was spent in alternately copying and practising Mr. Huntley's songs.

On Monday she sat to him for the last time; and again a little circumstance happened which gave her uneasiness. The day was so fine that they had resumed their seats in the garden; and as Hannah stood looking at her sister's picture, she took a rose and some mignonette which had somewhat faded, from her bosom, and threw them away. Huntley finished his morning's work; and the ladies, who were going to Hexley, returned to the house to dress themselves for the walk. Rosina, however, missed her handkerchief, and returned back to look for it. She saw Huntley, whose back was towards her, stoop eagerly to pick up the discarded flowers, press them to his lips with energy, and hastily conceal them. Rosina stood transfixed for a moment, and then hurriedly retraced her steps. No sooner was she out of sight than she stopped, her cheeks in a glow, to consider what had happened. Here had been no artifice, no attempt at effect. Huntley could not have suspected that a creature was near him. His action had been the romantic and spontaneous result of his feelings. Rosina was bewildered, amazed, and angry, yet could hardly tolerate her own suspicions. Smothering conviction under the persuasion that she must have been mistaken, she entered the house. But although Rosina tried to deceive herself, she could not maintain her usual ease of manner towards Mr. Huntley. She coldly drew back from his offered arm as he prepared to accompany them on their walk, and took that of her mother. "He deserves a little punishment at any rate," thought she. Huntley, rather surprised, but not a whit disappointed, offered the rejected arm to Hannah, and seemed little sensible of the designed mortification. Mrs. Wellford and Hannah were equally cheerful, and Rosina alone was sad and silent.

In the evening, Matthew drank tea with his family; and an important question was discussed. How could Rosina be conveyed to the Pleasance? Miss Pakenham had made no mention of Mrs. Shivers's carriage, and though this might be from forgetfulness, it was awkward to depend upon an uncertainty. Mr. Good's gig—! Did Matthew think it would be asking too much, to request that he might drive his sister over? Would Mr. Good be affronted? Would it be putting him to much inconvenience? Matthew did not know. As to

Mr. Good's being affronted, there was not the least chance of that—he had never known him affronted but once in his life, and that was by Parker of Hexley. He would not mind asking for the gig, plump, if he thought it could be spared. The thing was, that old Kippis required now to be seen every day, and the Grove lay in an opposite direction to the Pleasance. However, if Rosy was not tied to any particular time, and did not care whether she went late or early, he would see what could be done.

Mr. Huntley came in just as the tea things had been removed. He was anxious to know whether Rosina had tried his music. After a little persuasion, the piano was opened: and duett and song succeeded each other till the collection was exhausted. Huntley was delighted with the manner in which Rosina accompanied him, and she, in spite of the little *contre-temps* in the morning, was only too well pleased with his praise. Mrs. Wellford pursued or laid down her needle-work, listened to the singers, and talked to Matthew by turns. Matthew, who began to believe that Huntley *was* to be his brother-in-law,—whether guitar-playing were a manly accomplishment or no,—mechanically snipped to pieces a remnant of ribbon which Rosina had intended for a bonnet string, and drew heads of dogs and horses on the cover of her scrap book. This album had heretofore been devoted to extracts from ancient and modern authors, snatches of poetry, historical summaries, traits of village character, and such remarks on books, scenery, flowers, and natural history as might engage the mind of an innocent and inquiring girl of sixteen or seventeen. Some lines scrawled in Sam Good's round text on the last Valentine's Day, first broke the uniformity of the evenly written pages: they began with,

"Come, rove with me, Rosina,
The trees were never greener—"

a falsehood which nothing but the difficulty of finding a rhyme could have excused. From this era, the scrap-book assumed a different character. Idleness had caused it to be laid aside till Huntley had become domesticated in the family; and to Sam Good's valentine verses succeeded some closely written pages on colouring and perspective; the result of Huntley's verbal instructions. To these were annexed some stanzas by Herrick, written down by Huntley from memory; and here, Matthew remarked, the scrap-book opened of its

own accord. Several contributions from Lewis Pennington followed; all affecting to be general, though bearing some indirect allusion to Rosina: for instance, Carew's old song beginning with "He that loves a rosie cheek;" the same poet's "Lover's Complaint—"

"Now all things smile, only my love doth lower;"

and two or three rather pointed passages from Madame de Genlis. Matthew saw their application and shut the book with an angry sigh. Hannah, unusually idle, sat by the piano-forte, her cheek resting on her hand, and her mind lulled into that passive enjoyment of the present, and absence of regret for the past or anxiety for the future, which the Turks dearly purchase by the use of their favourite but dangerous drug. Huntley was perhaps inspired by her softly smiling eyes,

"Mild as the moonbeams which on fountains tremble."

His voice had certainly never owned more fascinating tones. Rosina sighed with regret when the evening terminated. Her suspicions had been completely forgotten: unfortunately for her present tranquillity, they were soon to be re-awakened.

Lady Worrall had not been seen or heard of for several days. Mrs. Wellford, fearful she had had a relapse, wished one or both of her daughters to call on the old lady. As Hannah was finishing some fine work for Rosina, she offered either to accompany her or work for her in her absence; the latter of which, on account of her approaching visit to Mrs. Shivers, Rosina preferred. It was a pleasant walk to Lady Worrall's, and she arrived at the house without any adventure. Her ladyship was rather rheumatic, but by no means seriously indisposed, and very glad to have some one to listen to the detail of her complaints. When she had exhausted the subject of her growing infirmities, her ladyship began to inquire for the news of the village; and on finding that Lewis Pennington had left Summerfield, she rated Rosina so soundly for letting him, as she termed it, slip through her fingers, that Rosina was very glad to take leave. Instead of returning by the shadeless, newly-gravelled carriage road, she took a narrow path leading through a small copse, which terminated in a gate in the park palings. Dis-

tressed by the bluntness of Lady Worrall's language, she gravely walked on, her eyes fixed on the ground, till she was startled by the quick slamming of the little gate. She looked up, expecting to see some one approaching, but the gate was before her, and nobody to be seen. It was evident, therefore, that some one had preceded her, who might possibly have been sitting on a wooden bench at no great distance from the gate. As Rosina passed it, she saw what seemed a letter lying on the ground ; and taking it up, she looked for the direction, to discover to whom she might return it. To her no small surprise, it proved to be a drawing of Hannah's, folded up in a portable shape, the reverse side closely covered with writing. How a drawing of Hannah's could possibly come into such a situation, Rosina could not divine : it was one of her best attempts at copying from nature, and merely consisted of a coloured group of violets. Rosina turned the paper, and seeing some verses headed "The Violet," began to read them, supposing her sister had been struck with their appropriateness, and had copied them from some book. The writing was so cramped in order to get several stanzas into a little space, that it might be that of Hannah or any one else. How great was her surprise when she read as follows !

" Where shall I match my fair one's eyes ?
 Not in the azure of the skies—
 The bird's-eye is a shade too pale,
 So is the harebell of the vale :
 Only the violet's darker dye
 Can match the colour of her eye.

" Where shall I match her breath's perfume ?
 Not where the gorse and heather bloom—
 Not in the hyacinth's sickly smell,
 Not in the cowslip's scented bell :
 Such heavenly fragrance may be met
 Only in the violet.

" Where shall I match my fair one's mind ?
 No emblem of its charm I find
 In the heat and vulgar glare
 Of the gaudy bright parterre ;
 Should I seek her image yet,
 'Tis still, 'tis still the violet !

" In fragrance, modesty, and hue,
 Two sweet resemblers here I view.
 But oh, fell thought ! upon the dead
 I've seen young violets scattered.
 Cease, similes ! Must Hannah's bloom,
 Like theirs, be gathered for the tomb ?"

Rosina stood aghast. The colour suddenly rose to her temples, and as suddenly faded away. The verses were Huntley's! He loved Hannah!

Sitting down on the bench, she remained with her eyes fixed on the tell-tale paper, till tears came to her relief. But they were quickly checked by indignation. Lewis had been right: Huntley had been playing a double part. How Rosina's heart swelled with anger, disdain, and shame, at the idea! He should find that he could deceive her no longer: she would shew him that she completely saw through him, and that his insidious conduct excited no other emotion than the most entire contempt. But, insidious? *Had* Mr. Huntley really deserved that epithet? Could she bring any particular speech or action of his to substantiate the charge? Many, many! was at first her answer to herself; but on rapidly running over the past, she knew not on what to fix her accusation. His crimes were as untangible as motes in sunbeams. His language had been that of common gallantry: looks and tones had been *felt* as meaning much, but had they been intended to mean as much as had been understood by them? Huntley seemed unable to address a woman except with *empressement*; Rosina had often been angry with him for throwing away sentiment on Phœbe Holland; and allowing for her own greater claims to youth and prettiness, perhaps his attentions to her had meant no more than to Phœbe. Mortifying, intolerable thought! Rosina sighed bitterly, and attempted to arrange her ideas, but they were in pitiable chaos. She read the verses over again. How came they there? Mr. Huntley must have been disturbed by her approaching footsteps, and have accidentally dropped them in his retreat. Could he have caught a glimpse of her white dress through the copsewood, and have mistaken her for Hannah? It was not unlikely, and in that case he might have intentionally left the verses in her way. The drawing must have been stolen: Hannah could never have *given* it. Rosina's eyes remained fixed on the paper. Lewis's warning again and again recurred to her memory. "Ah, Lewis!" thought she, "love made you jealous, but it also made you clear-sighted! Why would not I believe you?" Then as the thought returned that she was not loved by Huntley, tears swelled into her eyes; and she envied Hannah the possession of affections which she was sure she did not appreciate. "Happy girl!" thought she, "and yet what happiness can be too great for her? I can hardly think she has been blind to all that has

been going on ; yet if she really is unaware how much I have been attached to Mr. Huntley, her feelings shall never be embittered by my confessions and complaints. I hope I have too much generosity, too much pride for that!"

She remained sitting in a kind of dream, unconscious of the lapse of time, till the striking of the village clock made her start. Then, heroically resolving to resign Huntley without a sigh, she hastily wiped her eyes, put the verses in her pocket, and pursued her walk home. It was the first great trial of Rosina's life.

By the time she had reached the garden-gate, she had acquired a feverish sort of command over her spirits, which she hoped would enable her to behold the most evident proofs of Huntley's fickle affection without betraying any emotion. Hannah was in the parlour when she entered it, turning over the leaves of some books with apparent interest.

"Oh, Rosina," said she, "here are the Italian books which Mr. Huntley offered to lend you. He sent to town for them the same evening, and has just brought them himself. Was it not kind?"

"Very kind," said Rosina abruptly, without even looking at them, "but it does not much signify. My fancy for learning Italian has gone off."

"How very changeable of you, when the poor man has taken so much trouble to please you!"

"He take trouble to please me?" repeated Rosina, whose indignation was rapidly obtaining the mastery of her prudence ; "I am not the only person who is"—*changeable*, she was going to add, but checking herself in time, she ran up-stairs that she might not lose her self-command.

On her return she found the parlour empty, and with a sigh she examined the books. There were a dictionary, a grammar, and an 'Italian Reader,' something the worse for wear, interspersed, not with schoolboy scribblings, but with sensible notes in Mr. Huntley's handwriting, forming very good stepping-stones for any one, who, like himself, attempted to struggle through the difficulties of the language without a master. There were also two small volumes of Metastasio, elegantly bound, on the fly leaves of which was inscribed the name of 'Emmeline Huntley,' in a delicate Italian hand. Rosina stood with her eyes fixed on the name, till tears fell on the page. She hastily wiped them away ; then drawing the verses from her pocket, she smoothed them and placed them in the port-folio of their rightful owner, leaving them to

take their chance of meeting the eyes of her to whom they were addressed. She had scarcely done this when her mother entered, and inquired how she had found Lady Wormal. Rosina briefly informed her, and then sitting down to her needle-work, pursued it in unbroken silence.

In the course of the afternoon, Hannah happened to open her port-folio. "Dear me!" exclaimed she, as she turned over its contents, "here are the violets I thought I had lost!" Rosina made no reply; and presently looking up from her work, saw Hannah silently reading the verses. A slight colour rose on her cheek, but she made no comment on them; and withdrawing them from the port-folio, quitted the room. Rosina pursued her work with a sigh.

It was fortunate for her that Mr. Huntley did not call this evening. She conducted herself so as to excite no other remark than the silent one, that she spoke less than usual, and seemed rather out of spirits. At night, her pillow was steeped in tears; while Hannah, little imagining that any thing disturbed her, slept peacefully at her side. "Oh, that Mr. Huntley had never come to Summerfield!" was now Rosina's wish. Alas! there appeared little chance of his soon quitting the neighbourhood. Hannah's portrait was still in its first colours. On the following day she sat for her picture. Rosina pursued her needlework by her side, jealously listening to every syllable of Huntley's which might confirm her suspicions. Although his conversation was unusually commonplace, it seemed to Rosina, to betray his affection for Hannah at every syllable; and at any rate, the greater portion of it was addressed to her. Rosina did not consider that this might partly arise from her own monosyllabic answers, which rendered it impossible for any one to maintain a connected dialogue of any spirit or length with her. In spite of her intended indifference of manner, her unwonted silence and flagging spirits could not fail to be noticed. Huntley feared he had unwittingly offended her, and endeavoured to restore her to her usual cheerfulness; but his efforts were vain: Rosina was not to be drawn out, even by anecdotes of Sir Thomas Lawrence, and disquisitions on Mozart. He gave up the trial, hoping the young lady would find her good humour in her own good time; while Rosina, unconscious how much peevishness she had displayed, was deceiving herself in the belief that she had exercised great self-command.

It was fortunate that Rosina's approaching visit to Mrs. Shivers occasioned so much employment for her thoughts and

hands. The discovery of Mr. Huntley's supposed inconstancy had woefully depressed her, but with the Pleasance in prospect, it was impossible to be quite miserable. She sighed as she absently pinned and placed the sleeve of a frock which she was modernizing. The sleeve was stitched into the wrong armhole and made up inside outwards, so all her work had to be done over again; and while she was fretting over her stupidity she forgot to think of Mr. Huntley. Then, when all was once more in a fair train, her thoughts were no sooner off duty than they flew back to the violets, to the Sortes Virgilianæ, to the sittings under the walnut-tree; and just as she was beginning to feel that she should never be happy again,—it occurred to her to wonder whether Miss Pakenham *always* wore silk stockings. Let no one laugh at Rosina; for amidst the deepest grief, the mind has a natural propensity to relieve itself by momentary distractions of a similar tendency.

Friday came; and Matthew was to drive his sister to the Pleasance between the hours of three and four. But at half-past two, Miss Pakenham made her appearance in her aunt's pony phæton. She had had no idea that it had not been promised and expected. Only imagine, if, after all the doubts and difficulties that had occurred, *two* equipages at Rosina's disposal had driven down the lane at once! Matthew would have found that Mrs. Shivers's carriage *literally* "stopped the way."

Maria had heard that the Wellfords lived in a cottage; a very comprehensive word, which sometimes designates a ground-floor palace. Certainly she was rather surprised to find the White Cottage so *very* unpretending in appearance; but she praised and admired every thing there was to praise and admire, and drove off with Rosina, leaving Mrs. Wellford and Hannah convinced that she was one of the pleasantest young women in the world. This was very kind and judicious of Maria, for it is easier to put a family out of conceit with their house than to give them another; and a lady cannot help seeing at a glance what it would take a gentleman a twelvemonth to discover. A few flower-pots, a few books, and one or two pretty faces convince a gentleman that a mere hovel is a cottage *ornée*; a lady sees that the carpet has been darned, that the chintz furniture has washed out, and that the apparently rose-wood table is an imitation. Mrs. Wellford's table was mahogany. However,—

Once out of Summerfield, so many subjects offered for con-

versation, that it would have been difficult for the most love-lorn damsel to have nursed her secret griefs. Rosina was at once transplanted out of her little world ; and, at the end of five miles' drive, found herself among people who thought seldom of Mr. Russell, seldom of Lewis Pennington, and had never heard of Mr. Huntley.

Mr. Pakenham had gone to Scotland to shoot moorfowl ; the domestic society, therefore, at the Pleasance, was as confined as that which Rosina had left behind her ; but besides the exertion of mind always excited by strangers, and strangers in a higher sphere than ourselves, there was a great deal of quiet gaiety in Mrs. Shivers's mode of life. Morning visitors were not unfrequent, and scarcely an afternoon passed without a call being made at some park, lodge, or villa in the neighbourhood. This gave Rosina an opportunity of seeing a greater variety of society than had ever before been afforded her ; and her situation as a visitor to Mrs. Shivers caused her to meet with unfailing attention and politeness.

One of their earliest calls was on the Hinckleys of Hundleford. They found the family at home, and yet not at home—that is to say, they were practising archery on a lawn in front of the drawing-room windows. Mr. Hope and one or two other loungers were looking on, and a good deal was said about hearts and darts, and Diana, and Cupid. Rosina was disappointed in her brother's favourites : the eldest Miss Hinckley was plain, and the younger sisters were affected. There was a kind of showiness about them, however, which might impose on a very young man. They dressed, talked, and carried themselves like beauties, though beauties they were not. At present archery was the grand important business of life at Hundleford, and nothing could be talked of but the lovely white hats and green feathers of the archer uniform, Miss Joliffe's graceful attitudes, and Mrs. Peterson's bad shooting.

Much discourse was passing between the self-important Mr. Hope and one of the young Mr. Hinckley's about a Lady Jane Somebody, with whom they seemed on very familiar terms. Rosina, whose imagination was dazzled by grand names, listened attentively to snatches of their conversation, and thought Lady Jane, whoever she was, must be a very odd person. Mr. Hope talked in raptures of the "old girl." Her ladyship, it appeared, was a huntress. She had lately hurt herself in clearing a five barred gate. Her physicians were mentioned, and Mr. Hope expressed with strong feeling his

emotions on being at first told that they could not save her. Tom Hinckley declared his opinion that she was *spoiled*. Mr. Hope contradicted him with eagerness, and assured him that in another season she would be as well as ever. He should turn her out to grass!—Lady Jane proved to be a favourite mare.

At Mr. Field's at Field House, they found the table covered with Methodistical books; and Rosina heard doctrines discussed and tenets expounded in a manner wholly new to her. There was a union of simplicity and energy in Mrs. and Miss Field's manner, which rendered it impossible to suspect them of hypocrisy; and the new ideas they awakened furnished Rosina with materials for profitable consideration. At Barham Lodge again, the Miss Petersons made such a display of accomplishments and blue-ism, as to give her a sickening of pretension; and at Stepsford, only five miles from her native village, old Mrs. Joliffe and her nieces had so much tittle-tattle to relate of their neighbours, the Joneses, and the Whites, and the Simpsons, and the ATKINSONS, and appeared to deem all the rest of the world so uninteresting in comparison, that Rosina was led to question whether she herself were not somewhat too much disposed to think Summerfield affairs of primary importance. Mrs. Shivers and Miss Pakenham amused themselves by commenting on the varieties of character which they met in these visits, without indulging in ill-nature; and Rosina profited more by the casual morals thus drawn, than if they had fallen from the lips of persons of whose station and opinion she stood less in awe. She saw Miss Pakenham receive attention and admiration without displaying any elation or self-conceit; she heard folly reprehended as freely in the wealthy and titled as in the insignificant; she heard pretension ridiculed, and conscientious limitation of expenses praised. She heard girls laughed at for dressing beyond their station and neglecting domestic duties, and their parents blamed with more severity, for bringing them up improperly. Miss Pakenham was lively and acute; Mrs. Shivers's conversation, without any tinge of effort or pedantry, united enough of natural wit with acquired knowledge, to require a little effort to keep up with her. She played extremely well on the harp, and Rosina had an opportunity of pleasantly improving herself by accompanying her on an excellent grand piano. Her fancy for learning Italian returned when she listened to Maria's tantalizing encomiums of Tasso, and saw the beautiful engravings in Mrs. Shivers's Gierusa-

lemme. An hour devoted every morning to this study agreeably exercised her mind ; and the profusion of fine prints and drawings in the port-folios around her, only made it a difficult task to decide which she should first attempt to copy. The library was a world of happiness in itself. Surrounded by so many sources of amusement, what wonder that Rosina's spirits should rapidly recover from their depression, and that she should learn to think of Mr. Huntley with a degree of indifference, which to herself she called resignation ? " Absence," it has been observed like a puff of wind, makes a well kindled flame burn brighter, but blows a smaller one out." The visit was prolonged from a week to rather more than a fortnight, and its conclusion was gayer than its opening. Mr. Hope and the Hinckleys dined at the Pleasance ; and perhaps Rosina's estimate of Mr. Huntley's manners and education was rather altered by the glimpses thus afforded of young men in a rank of life superior to his own ; so that from thinking of him somewhat more highly than he deserved, she now began to rate him rather below his real worth.

On the day after her quitting the Pleasance, Mrs. Shivers and Miss Pakenham were going to Hastings. She returned to Summerfield with abundant materials for long details to her mother and sister, and with a heart scarcely retaining the impress of its sometime love.

CHAPTER XXII.

FINE ARTS.

AND how sped Mr. Huntley's painting and wooing ?

With satisfaction, almost with exultation, he had heard of Rosina's projected absence. Somehow, she had always seemed to stand across his path—his feelings and language had been misconstrued, nor did there seem any chance of his explaining them, till he had an opportunity of speaking in plainer terms than he had yet dared to use.

Rosina was gone, and the path was clear ! He could finish Hannah's portrait and besiege her heart at the same time.

But Huntley was very wary; he was in thorough earnest, and his genius was as remarkable in love-making as in any other art, accomplishment, or science, which he had yet mastered. The more his acquaintance with Hannah improved, the more he became sensible of the difference between her retiring manners and the approachableness of her sister, and of the difficulty of awakening her dormant passions and kindling her imagination. But remembering that the placidly smiling wave, may anon be roused by the winds to chafe and foam on the rocks, and that thunder sleeps unsuspected in the summer cloud, Huntley trusted that Hannah's heart, if once awakened, might glow with all the intensity of feeling he wished to excite. Leaving little to depend on her inexperience and vanity, and wisely judging of her character, he resolved to begin by making her *like* him, hoping that in time she would like him better than she loved *every* one else. He entered with interest into all her favourite pursuits, encouraged her to talk to him of her books, her flowers, her brothers, and the villagers, discovered a wonderful similarity of feeling between them, declared his passionate fondness for a country life immediately after giving tantalizing descriptions of London, expressed her own opinions for her better than she could have done herself, or replied to her remarks by a bright intelligent smile and a gratified "that is exactly what I think—that is what I was going to observe!" He praised her favourite authors, detected her favourite passages, frequented her favourite walks, and sketched her favourite flowers. "Dahlias have wanted interesting associations to me hitherto," said he, "but henceforward, they will always remind me of you." Then he appeared so sensibly to appreciate the excellence of Mrs. Wellford's character, and spoke so well of Mr. Russell, and so often of Matthew and Rosina, that Hannah's good will was completely secured. Good will, indeed, does not amount to love, but it affords excellent opportunities for making it. Hannah did not run in from the garden if she saw Mr. Huntley coming down the lane; and whenever she went to the village or the scattered cottages around it, he seldom failed to meet her, and to escort her back. Why should she shrink from his society? He never talked nonsense, as she had occasionally heard young men do, about bright eyes and incurable wounds: to Miss Phœbe Holland, for whom he cared not a straw, love was the burthen of his lay, while to her he always spoke as to a rational being.

When, indeed, the point of their similarity of tastes and sympathy of minds seemed established beyond dispute, his speech became more explicit, though still it was *une voix voilée*. He spoke of "love—not of his own!—but of others; and history, poetry, common life, were all in turn ransacked for illustrations, leading to disquisitions on constancy, devotedness, affection without hope, all treated as general subjects, though broken off with a pause and a sigh; till Hannah, like the heroine of Mrs. Tighe's exquisite allegory, dwelt in the atmosphere of love and felt the fanning of his wings, unconscious of his presence. Her mother was more clear-sighted, but she liked Huntley, and believed he might make Hannah happy. It would not be a brilliant match for either; both had exhaustless treasures of mind,—of fortune, none.

Italian became another vehicle of Huntley's passion. Hannah, attracted by the appearance of the books which he had sent for Rosina, and rather ashamed of her sister's inconstancy of purpose, said she should attempt to make use of them herself, and Huntley eagerly offered himself as her teacher. Rosina, meanwhile, was beginning her acquaintance with the language under the direction of Miss Pakenham, but the progress of the sisters was very different. Rosina toiled through the tedious routine of grammars and exercise books. Huntley skipped over as much of the dry part of the business as possible, and endeavoured to lead Hannah by a new and quick road to the sense of her author. He made her read after him a stanza from his pocket Tasso, assisted her in construing it, and by frequent repetition, possessed her of the pronunciation. Then taking the book from her hand, he translated for her, page after page, of the fascinating story,—closed it with a smile, and to accustom her to the sound, repeated some favourite verse or sentiment in his beautifully modulated tones, till she caught not only the accent, but the very tone and emphasis of her lover. Huntley, delighted with her and with himself, exacted frequent repetition of her lesson—for her own improvement, as he would have it believed, but in reality, to luxuriate in hearing the voice of her he loved utter beautiful thoughts in the most musical of languages. Well might Milton say

"Questa e lingua di cui si vanta Amore."

Love breathes in its softness, its repetitions of sound, its 'felicità, crudeltà, amore, ardore, speranza, costanza,' which chime in with each other so naturally, that an Italian lover can scarcely escape being an improvisatore. So many minutes, hours, half mornings, and whole evenings did Huntley contrive to spend with Hannah, that he was seldom out of her sight, and seldom out of her thoughts. Like the coin, which, impressed on our hand, we seem still to hold after it is removed, he, being absent, appeared still present; and Hannah, poring over her Italian lessons, watering her flowers, or plying her needle, had still one image before her eyes, coming uncalled, like Abra, and changing disguises as rapidly as Matthews in his *Monopolylogue*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ARTIST'S PROGRESS.

ROSINA had so much to relate, and her listeners were so much interested in the narrative of her visit, that bed-time had nearly arrived before she made the inquiry—"Well! and how has every-thing been going on here?"

"Much as usual, I believe," said Hannah.

"That means—Mr. Russell has called three or four times each week; Mr. Huntley, ditto, ditto; Matthew has drunk tea with you twice, and Phoebe Holland called once; Mr. Good has been seen in the village, and Lady Worrall at church; Mrs. Greenway has met you at the shop and told you that she has had a charming letter from Anne and Eliza; on Monday you were caught in the rain, and on Tuesday you carried an umbrella to Hexley and back without wanting it. Would not that be 'much as usual'?"

"But we have not been to Hexley."

"An evident proof that I was not at home. What! a whole fortnight unenlivened by a walk to Hexley? No ribbons, bobbins, tapes, or needles wanted, nor any wants invented? You must have been shockingly dismal—or excessively happy. Which?"

"Not particularly dismal," said Hannah, in the smiling consciousness of having been particularly the reverse.

"Not dismal at all," said Mrs. Wellford, looking expressively at Hannah.

"Well, I wonder at that, considering *I* was away; I am of less importance than I thought *I* was."

At night, when Rosina went to her bed-room window, she called Hannah to see how beautifully the moon was shining. Hannah obeyed, and after a few moments' silence, gently repeated,

"Guarda che bianca luna!
Guarda che notte azura!
Un' aura non susurra,
Non tremola una stella."

"Why, Hannah!" cried Rosina, with surprise, "are you able to quote Italian?"

"I have been learning a little in your absence," replied she, smiling.

"I have been learning Italian too, but you seem to know much more about it than I do. Your fluency, in so short a time, is quite surprising! I should never have suspected you of a talent for acquiring languages!"

The next morning, the two sisters were sitting at work, and Rosina was wondering to herself what advances Mr. Huntley had made, during her absence, in Hannah's affections. She was just going to ask whether the picture were nearly finished, and suddenly looked up, when she perceived a crimson blush on the cheek of her sister, whose eyes were turned towards the garden. Rosina looked the same way, and saw Mr. Huntley passing through the gate. That blush told volumes! Rosina again glanced at Hannah, who was quietly resuming her work, while her colour was gradually returning to its usual delicacy of tint.

Before Rosina had much time for speculation, Huntley entered. There was ease as well as pleasure in his manner of meeting her—he held out his hand. Rosina was surprised; she gave her hand to him, however, with as much coolness as she could; and looked towards her sister. Hannah, though still slightly blushing, received him with as much evenness of manner as usual; it was only from Huntley's look and tone that any thing could be gathered; and they were less ceremonious, more open, more expressive of affection than Rosina had anticipated. She could hardly understand his having gained so much ground in so short a

time. He appeared to feel himself on the footing of a recognized lover.

"Will you walk, this morning?" said he, after conversing for a short time on in different topics.

"Do you not mean to paint?" inquired Rosina, with a little surprise.

"Oh, no, the colours are not dry. I should do more harm than good if I touched the pannel to-day. Come let me persuade you. The weather is enchanting. You had better walk."

"I hardly know,—this morning, Rosina?" said Hannah, hesitatingly.

"Why should this morning be more unfavourable than yesterday, to-morrow, or any other morning?" said Huntley, rapidly. "There can be so little rational hope that such fine weather will last long, that you should avail yourselves of it as much as you can."

"What do you think, Rosina?" again inquired Hannah, with unusual indecision.

"If you and mamma have no objection," said Rosina smiling at her, "I can have none."

"Mamma is engaged—she will not be able to accompany us.—Perhaps I had better go and ask her," said Hannah, and she left the room.

"You have had charming weather during your visit to Mrs. Shivers's," said Huntley, playing with Hannah's scissars. "I suppose you had a walk every day."

"A *drive* every day."

"A *drive*! Ah, true. I forgot what grand ladies I was speaking of. A carriage is a fine thing; however," (laughing) "I doubt not whether we pedestrians have not the most enjoyment, after all."

'Have not' is better than 'had not,' certainly, thought Rosina. She could not help feeling that he addressed her with more freedom and yet more indifference than hitherto. His easy, open way of asking them to take a walk was something new: formerly, he had occasionally accompanied them, but only by accident or on sufferance.

Hannah returned to say that her mother had no objection to their walking, but that she should be unable to accompany them.

"I suppose," said Rosina, as she and her sister dressed themselves, "Mr. Huntley has been here a good deal in my absence—hey, Hannah?"

"Yes,—that is—much as usual. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, I do not know.—He seems more *at home* here than he did—"

"Well—and in proportion as our acquaintance improves, is that not natural?"

"Oh! very natural, I dare say!" said Rosina, laughing, as she ran down-stairs.

The walk was as pleasant as walks generally are, when a gentleman dividing two ladies pays considerably more attention to one than the other. Rosina knew that this would often be the case now, and was resigned. She could remark without bitterness of feeling, Hannah's softly smiling countenance and downcast eyes. Rosina had often marvelled how Hannah would look if she should ever be in love, or whether she were capable of ever falling in love at all. The doubt was now answered, and it seemed to her that Hannah looked and spoke exactly as might have been foreseen by any one who had had opportunities of judging of her character.

On their return, they fell in with Mr. Russell. He smiled, but with a certain degree of gravity as he spoke to them. Mr. Russell has not lost his austere looks yet, thought Rosina; am I still out of his good graces?

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRATERNAL CONFIDENCES.

THE next post brought her the following letter from Marianne Pennington.

"Oh, Rosina! I am mortified and angry with you! I need not say why, for though Lewis will not speak honestly to me, I can guess from his manner at much that has passed at Summerfield. He came home three days ago, and seems as glad to see us as usual. The only suspicious circumstance was his extreme guardedness in neither saying too much or too little, and when you consider Lewis's character, you will grant that this was enough to set our minds at work. When we asked him if he had had a pleasant excursion, he said 'very,' and began to praise the roads and scenery. Papa

told him that would not do ;—that a man who had lived a month in a country village must have characters as well as roads to talk about. He then began to speak of Mr. Russell, of your mother, of your brother, your sister,—every one, in short, except yourself ; and when I asked him—pray do not blush,—whether you were a pretty girl, he replied ‘yes—so they are both.’ He gave a half sigh, but no more could Sophy and I sift out of him, except yes, yes, yes, when we asked if you could do this, that, or the other ; and when he began to play with the children, and talk absurd French to Mademoiselle Mackau, we knew the case was hopeless for that night. Next morning, to our surprise and vexation, he began to talk of his travels, and told my father that instead of waiting till next spring, he had been thinking he might as well spend the approaching winter in Germany. You know Lewis has always had a fancy for rambling, and used to frighten mamma when he was a boy, by declaring that as soon as he was of age he should set off to discover the source of the Niger. Since he has grown older, the Niger scheme has passed off, and mamma is well content to hear him talk of Germany and Italy as a distant prospect; but this sudden idea alarmed us all, with the exception of my father. To-day they have been seriously talking on the subject, and I really believe it will end in his going to Heidelberg. Oh, Rosina ! this is all owing to you ! I am convinced of it. Lewis was growing out of his boyish whims, and if it had not been for a disappointment, would have cared as little for Heidelberg as for the Troglodytes ; and now, what a brother we shall lose ! Sophy and I are at the last gasp of despair ; but I am the most to be pitied, for I have always been his chosen companion and confidante. Three years ago, when he fancied himself in love with a Miss Edgar (who, by the by, is nearly twice his age,) I was made the partaker of all his little triumphs and vexations ; therefore now, when I suspect there is some real feeling excited, it is doubly mortifying that he should be so close. That my suspicions are not quite without foundation, I am certain, from what passed this morning ; for as he was lounging upon a sofa, reading or pretending to read, I came on him by surprise, and said, ‘Come, dear Lewis, now that we are quite by ourselves, tell me all about it.’ ‘About what, Miss Marianne?’ said he, starting and colouring. ‘Oh ! said I, ‘I am sure you would not be in this mighty hurry to set off for Germany, if there were not some disappointment in the case.’ ‘Disappointment ! nonsense !’ cried Lewis, forcing a

laugh, 'you girls always fancy that love must be the prime-mover of all our actions. I'll tell you what, Marianne—I don't think either you or I shall ever marry ; so some of these days we'll set up housekeeping together, and have our books, and our horses, and our garden, and be the happiest old bachelor and old maid that ever lived.' With these words he walked off, and set out on a long ride from which he has not yet returned, leaving me convinced that he or you might clear up a good deal of mystery if you chose. Have you quarrelled, Rosina ? Do tell me, if that is the case—Lewis has the sweetest disposition in the world, but he is a little warm sometimes, and he may have offended you, or you may have unintentionally offended him. We quarrelled once, but we soon made it up again and were better friends than ever afterwards ; and so may you still be, if you choose.

"I suppose you know that your aunt Diana is lying dangerously ill at Dover. Mr. Curtis was summoned by express yesterday to attend her. I wish her money would go to you instead of to Mrs. Parkinson, who does not want it. What a difference it would make to us if you lived at Park-Place ! The house is shut up now, and we shall not be much gayer when your aunt and uncle return. We are poorly off for neighbours, it must be confessed : however, thank goodness, we are completely independent of them ; and papa and I pursue our study of natural history with unabating ardour. Isabella is still with the Pensonbys at Hastings, but she will return to us in a fortnight. Mainma desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Wellford ; and Sophy unites in love and good wishes to you with your always affectionate

"MARIANNE PENNINGTON."

Rosina's feelings, on reading this letter, bordered on regret. "Certainly it would have been better," thought she, with a sigh, "if neither Lewis nor I had been quite so precipitate. He had a thousand good qualities, it must be confessed, and I begin to doubt whether there are many people either so amiable or so entertaining. He had good principles too—I sometimes doubt whether Mr. Huntley's principles are very firm—and if Lewis could not sing, it is not quite certain that Mr. Huntley can dance. Genius is a very fine thing ; but so is good temper, and it is to be doubted whether, if Mr. Huntley's temper were tried, it would prove quite equal to Lewis's.

If Hannah, for instance, were to tease him as I used to tease Lewis! And even as to genius,—Lewis certainly had *wit*. I can recollect two or three rather clever things of his saying. One day, I remember hearing him say to Matthew, ‘Many people fancy themselves capable of forgiving their enemies, who find it mighty hard to forgive their friends.’ And another time, he said that Mr. Huntley would have to answer for the sin of making him love the inconstant Orpah better than the constant Ruth, and that though Ruth was crossing the desert, there could be no desert where there was Orpah.”

Rosina sighed again, and folded up her letter. She shrank from the task of answering it, and resolved to postpone the duty for the present. As it was impossible to shew the letter to her mother and sister, she had some doubt whether it would not be as well to say nothing of having received it: here, however, the matter did not rest in her own hands, for Mrs. Wellford happened to have seen the postman at the gate. Rosina said as carelessly as she could, that she was not quite at liberty to tell what Marianne had written about, and no more questions were asked, though she teased herself by wondering how much was suspected. She mentioned her aunt Diana’s illness, and it was well she did, for the next post brought Mrs. Wellford a letter from Mr. Parkinson, announcing Mrs. Diana’s death. The letter was brief and rather stiff; in the course of ten days, however, it was followed by a second, much more cordially worded, stating that the bulk of Mrs. Diana’s property had, as was expected, been left to her eldest niece, but that Mrs. Wellford had a legacy of eight hundred pounds. Never was legacy more opportune: Harry was now old enough to leave school, and it was high time for Matthew to visit the London hospitals. Here were funds sufficient to supply their approaching expenses, and such a world of anxiety was removed from Mrs. Wellford’s mind, that she did not breathe a single impatient sigh at the difference between her sister’s circumstances and her own.

Huntley found himself excluded from the cottage during the interval between Mrs. Diana’s death and her burial. He was surprised at the vacuum thus occasioned in his mind, and endeavoured to cheat the consciousness of it by longer extended rambles than he had been of late in the habit of taking, and by occasionally bestowing his idleness on Mr. Russell, of whom he had lately seen little. Mr. Russell did not receive him with coldness, but there was more penetration exerted, less inclination to take Huntley’s opinions on trust than formerly.

Huntley found himself engaged in rather deep ethical discussions, where, conscious of his own want of power, he endeavoured to dazzle by allusion and metaphor rather than by boldly encountering his antagonist, or more frequently, let Mr. Russell have his own way after a little faint opposition, secretly wearied with the subject and wishing to lure him back to belles-lettres. To his joy, he was soon re-admitted at the White Cottage, and the sight of Hannah in her mourning, recompensed him for all the ennui of his banishment. But he had, for the present, lost the first place in Hannah's thoughts. Mr. Good had advised Matthew's going to town without loss of time; Matthew himself wished it; and preparations for his journey and grief at the prospect of the separation engrossed the minds of his mother and sisters. Rosina, sanguine as was her own disposition, and dazzled by the prospect of whatever was lively or new, had the inconsistency to wonder and be a little hurt at her brother's delight at leaving Summerfield, and to think him rather unfeeling. On the evening before his journey, however, Matthew came to drink tea with his family; and while his mother and Hannah were packing up his linen, he asked Rosina to put on her bonnet and take a turn with him in the lane. She found her arm pressed rather tightly to his side, though he began by whistling a bar or two of *Cherry Ripe*.

"Well," said he, with a smothered sigh, "I shall not be here to-morrow evening, Rosy; nor the next, nor the next. It will be a good while before we shall meet again, and how many things may happen in the mean time! Shall I find you all such as I left you? That is more than you can tell, or I either. I wonder if this Huntley is to be my brother-in-law, after all, or not."

"Do you wish he should be, Matthew?"

"Upon my honour, Rosy, I can hardly tell you. At one time I fancied that it was *you* and he that were in love with each other, and then I could not bear him. But now, somehow—"

"Well?"

"Now, somehow, that he is evidently attached to Hannah and that she is pleased with him, I seem to see his character in a different light. There appears to be more sincerity, more depth of feeling about him than I thought there was at first. And yet, Rosy, in spite of his wit and genius, and—all that—I cannot feel quite cordial towards him. I cannot fancy that he is worthy of Hannah."

"Who can be, I wonder, if Mr. Huntley is not?"

"Ah, Rosina, you may say so, but it is not wit and *genius* alone that will make a woman happy. You laugh, but I am not speaking at random. Hannah is happy now, and I could not bear ever to see her otherwise. Wit and *genius* alone, will not make Hannah happy. There must be temper and principle besides, and on these points I have my doubts of Huntley. He may or may not possess them, but we know very little of him. Well! things must take their course. Who knows what may happen to *me* in the next twelvemonth? Do you recollect the queer map that Mr. Russell once shewed us,—drawn by Martin Belein,—which Columbus took with him on his first voyage? Islands, and straits, and shoals, and bays, all set down by guess—the imaginary kingdom of St. Brandon on one hand, on the other, the island of Cathay: in one place was written, "no ships can sail among these islands on account of the loadstones with which they abound;" in another, "syrens sing along these coasts."

"Yes, I recollect it. What of it?"

"Why, I am going to make a fine simile. Is not that just like the ocean of life? We expect to meet dangers and pleasures, but we cannot, with all our calculations beforehand, tell when we shall come upon them. Those we expected to meet with, prove fallacious and we find others in their stead. So all the guesses we make at what will and what will not be, are about as useful to us as Martin Belem's chart to Columbus, and all we can do is, like Columbus, to set a bold face on the matter and take storms and sunshine as they are given us."

"Well, Mathew, you have made something grand of Martin Belem at last. Be sure you write to us often."

"As often as I can; but you know, what with attending lectures, and dissecting, and walking through hospitals, and now and then perhaps going to the play, I shall not have much time to spare: therefore don't fancy because I do not write to you regularly, that I must have punctured my finger, or caught the typhus fever. I will write to you when I have leisure, and when I have anything to say—"

"Oh, you will always have plenty to say,—in London!"

"And mind that you write frequently to me too. I shall be very industrious, and very economical; my mother has been so generous that it would be a shame if I were to be otherwise. And I shall come back to see you at Christmas; and some of these days perhaps, Mr. Good may take me into

partnership, or Parker of Hexley may sell his business. Harry will be in Mr. Smith's office, and my mother and Hannah will perhaps in time keep house for one of us,—for Hannah *must* not marry Huntley, Rosy!—and—”

“ And why am I left out?”

“ Oh! you and Sam Good—”

“ Nonsense, Matthew!”

“ Well then, you and Lewis Pennington—”

“ Nonsense!”

“ You won't hear me out. Well then; my mother and Hannah shall keep house for Harry, and you shall live with me.”

“ Do you mean then to be a bachelor?”

“ Why not?” After a pause he added carelessly, “ By the by, perhaps you do not know that the Hinckleys are going to live on the continent.”

“ Are they? Well, *we* shall not miss them much, that is one comfort.”

Matthew began to whistle again; but this time, it was—

“ Oh no, we never mention her,
Her name is never heard.”

“ How beautifully Mr. Huntley sings that song!” said Rosina.

“ Does he?—See, there is Hannah beckoning to us at the gate. Come! let us have a run down the lane.”

CHAPTER XXV.

CRITICISMS.

MR. RUSSELL, with all his goodness of heart and strength of judgment, was but a man. He had his prejudices; and one day he was angry with Huntley for calling Lord Byron the greatest of modern poets.

“ A great poet,” replied he, “ is one who purifies your mind instead of enervating or poisoning it—who either peoples this actual earth with a fair and exquisite creation of his own, or quits it altogether and scorns with you into the world of

intellect, leaving no misanthropic disgust, no metaphysical falsities clinging to you when he is laid aside, but making you wiser and better than you were before. Milton does this; and even in these present times, there are poets who have aimed at and achieved better things than Lord Byron, and whom I consequently esteem better poets. They are the best who raise you highest."

This was irritating to Huntley, whose admiration of his favourite writer approached idolatry. He defended him with warmth, quoting passage after passage from Childe Harold, and exclaiming, "You cannot deny the splendour of that thought"—"you will acknowledge the beauty of this," while Mr. Russell, whose opinion of their moral, or rather, immoral tendency, somewhat obscured his perception of their beauty, remained obstinately fixed in his original way of thinking. The discussion was dropped, but they were not quite so well pleased with each other as before; Huntley silently accusing Mr. Russell of illiberality, and Mr. Russell thinking Huntley's opinions too free.

Mr. Russell had not been often at the White Cottage lately. One morning, soon after Matthew's quitting Summerfield, he called, and found Hannah sitting to Huntley for her picture, Mrs. Wellford reading Mr. Good's daily paper, and Rosina copying one of Flaxman's illustrations of the Greek dramatists, which had been lent her by Mrs. Shivers. Mr. Russell admired the accuracy of her drawing, and began to speak of the fable which it illustrated, and of the absurdities of the heathen mythology.

"Absurd as it was," observed Huntley, "we artists may be thankful to it for the finest sculptures in the world."

"And can you really be thankful that myriads of human beings should wallow for ages in the grossest idolatry, merely because the sculptor hence had fanciful subjects offered to his chisel?"

"Of course I spoke only in jest. Though Apollo and Venus had never been, the genius of Phidias would not have slept. No—of all absurdities it appears to me the greatest, that man should worship the work of his own hands."

"Idolatry," said Mr. Russell, "is as natural to barbarous, as infidelity is to half-civilized minds. A vivid ill-regulated imagination leads to one, and a cold sluggish imagination to the other. The man whose feelings and fancy are equally inert, sees God nowhere: the man whose lively mind is uncontrolled by knowledge and reason, sees everywhere, not

one, but many gods. He is brought into close contact with the mighty works of creation, and is unable to fathom their laws. To him, the sun, because beyond his control, appears uncontrolled; the seasons, returning regularly, seem to do so of their own accord. And what he admires or fears, he worships: thus arise a host of imaginary deities,—‘Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood,’—‘Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns.’ Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Huntley, as an argument against the authenticity of Ossian, that there is no mention of idolatrous worship in his poems? His gloomy chiefs erect no altars, pour no libations.”

“It is enough for me,” said Huntley, laughing, “that a regular epic in six books, should have been translated from manuscripts which are nowhere to be seen, and that his Celtic damsels are ladies of the utmost delicacy and refinement, white-handed and white-footed, in spite of exposure to the sun and air, with no more debasing employments than playing on the harp and braiding their golden hair.”

“And why should not they play on the harp, and braid their hair?” said Rosina, who loved Ossian, not wisely but too well.

“If I might differ from a lady, I should say that the wives of Fingal and Ossian were more likely to have occupied themselves in sewing together their garments of skin, and dressing the game which their husbands brought from the hills.”

“Ah, Mr. Huntley! and have you no admiration of Cathullin, mourning that he is unworthy to bear the shield of his fathers, or Gaul, or Fillan of the dark brown hair? And what do *you* say, Mr. Russell, to the address to the sun?”

“An imitation, gross, palpable, of the scriptural passage which describes him, coming from his chamber as a bridegroom, and rejoicing as a mighty man to run a race.”

“Oh! very, very different, Mr. Russell! Think of the old, blind, melancholy man, regretful of the past, and hopeless of the future; unable to behold the sun that warms his chilly limbs, and sorrowfully saying ‘thou, perhaps, art like me, for a season, thy years will have an end: thou shalt sleep in the clouds, careless of the voice of the morning.’ Oh, Mr. Russell! Mr. Huntley! is there no poetry in this?”

Their looks told her that there was.

“Yes,” said Mr. Russell, “whether the merit lies with you Rosina, or Macpherson, or Ossian, the picture is striking.

When we think of an old man thus bereft of his most precious faculties, and his dearest kindred, nothing left to enjoy on earth, and no hope beyond the grave,—we are almost ready to exclaim with Lord Bacon, 'I would rather believe the wildest fables of Mohammedanism, Hindooism, or the Talmud, than be an atheist.'

"I cannot go quite so far with you as that," said Huntley. "The atheist is mistaken and unhappy, but there is something childish, degrading, in superstition."

"We are usually more indulgent, Huntley, to the vices of the day than to those which have gone out of fashion."

"The vice of the day?" said Rosina, looking rather alarmed, "do you think atheism is common now?"

"An atheist, Rosina, is one who does not believe in the existence of a God. Now, the seeds of truth are so deeply planted in our hearts, and a certain degree of religious knowledge is so common to all, that I believe there are very few who would seriously, calmly, and decidedly avow themselves atheists; but when does infidelity take firmest root?—I should say, when the mass of population is congregated in large cities, when factitious wants to an endless extent are created, and much time employed in satisfying those wants; when all make pretensions to freedom from prejudice, and all are acutely sensible of ridicule; when each pretends to a *knowledge of mankind*, but examines his own conscience little, and the works of nature less. Am I right, do you think? Then, the selfishness engendered by dwelling in a large community where it is impossible to sympathize with all, and each must look to his own interest,—and the suspicious temper created by frequently detecting imposition,—above all, the constant whirl of business and amusement, particularly indisposes the mind to feel any interest in religion. Again the dread of singularity makes many pious persons try to appear like those around them, carefully avoid speaking on serious subjects, and effect to be as much engrossed by the plaything of the minute as their neighbours, when they have scarcely risen from their knees. These grow lukewarm in faith, while others, gathering strength from *their* weakness, openly make a jest of all that is sacred. Thus as cities multiply and luxury increases, infidelity increases too."

"Very true," said Huntley, throwing aside his palette, "but now come and tell me what you think of my morning's work. How do you like my fair Moabitess?"

"Extremely; there is a moral beauty about her head which

does credit both to your hand and the mind which directed it. But, Huntley, do you usually paint at the rate you have done the last two months?"

"Why?"

"Because, if you do, you must be a very exorbitant fellow in your demands, to make your profession pay tolerably."

Huntley laughed. "I certainly *have* taken this picture very leisurely. But my time has not been wasted, for I have made many sketches which will be very useful to me hereafter. I have painted the head of my landlady too, Mrs. Stokes, in burnt umber, by candle-light, and I have an unfinished study of Miss Rosina, which some of these days I mean shall rival Sir Joshua Reynolds."

"I am rather affronted by the consideration that as you have taken the likenesses of almost every one in the neighbourhood, you have never once offered to paint *me*."

"I will sketch you out *instanter*, if you like. But I fear we shall never agree about your attitude and costume. *You* would dislike a fancy character; now *I* scorn the idea of mere portrait painting, and cannot consent to paint any thing that is not either picturesque or historical."

"Is there not something graceful in the folds of a surplice?" said Mrs. Wellford:

"Or is a plain suit of black so very hard to paint?" suggested Hannah.

"It will never do, ladies. No, no, if Mr. Russell will be a pope or a monk, or even a begging friar, we will soon strike a bargain. But if he refuses to be un-Protestanted even on canvass, I will have nothing more to say to him. A cowl, or a mitre, or he loses his head!"

"Who is that coming in?" said Mrs. Wellford, looking up, as something very gay passed the window and momentarily darkened the room.

"Miss Holland, I should guess, from the impression of the foot," said Huntley, glancing out at the moist gravel; "*Ex pede Herculem.*"

Mr. Russell smiled. "Hush," said Rosina, "it is Mrs. Greenway."

Mrs. Greenway entered. She had never possessed great beauty, but what little she had, had been very well preserved, so that no one would have guessed her to have been considerably Mrs. Wellford's senior. She had not much to say for herself, although fond of talking, but she had a very good memory for the sayings of others; so that, with her pleasant

smile and quiet voice, if she happened to have been lately in the company of a clever person, she could be very agreeable. The only complaint that could be made was, that as her mind was retentive rather than discriminating, she remembered as much of Miss Holland's opinion on the comparative merits of *Levantine* and *Gros-des-Indes*, as of Mr. Good's notions of the Catholic question.

One of the first inquiries made of Mrs. Greenway was a laughing question, whether she brought any news of Matthew. It was odd enough, that the first intelligence received of him after his arrival in town came through the Miss Greenways. He had taken charge of a parcel for them which he delivered in person at the house of their uncle, a physician of tolerable repute, under whose hands the youngest Miss Greenway was at present placed for the benefit of her health. Matthew slyly thought an introduction to Dr. Greenway might be no bad thing for him, and conducted himself so well as to secure a dinner invitation. The Miss Greenways wrote to tell their mother that their uncle thought Mr. Wellford a promising young man, and Matthew's first letter was in praise of the hospitalities of Bloomsbury Square; that Bloomsbury, the gentility of which he had been so heretical as to call in question.

"No, he hasn't been at my brother's lately," said Mrs. Greenway. "Oh, indeed, you have no right to complain of him if he writes to you once a week. My girls only write twice, and you know women are always better correspondents than men."

"But, Mrs. Greenway, he finds time to write to Sam Good oftener than to us. Now is that not abominable? Sam Good is always finding opportunities to walk over here, and drop hints of what Matthew tells him; just as if *we* were excluded from his confidence! Is not that too bad?"

Mrs. Greenway laughed, looked arch, and said perhaps Sam Good might have a better reason for walking over. Rosina's look of scorn highly amused Mr. Russell. Huntley, without paying Mrs. Greenway a higher compliment than a few minutes' cessation from his occupation, took up his brush, and after absently touching and re-touching the foreground, soon resumed his palette in earnest. This attracted the observation of Mrs. Greenway, who came behind him to wonder and admire.

"That face looks so very natural," said she, looking at Hannah's portrait. "As Mr. Greenway said the other day,

you've snatched a grace beyond the reach of art. I should like one of my girls to be able to paint in oils, amazingly; but unluckily, Anna has no notion of drawing, and Eliza does not dare to touch a pencil, now her uncle has sentenced her to a reclining board. Dr. Greenway is a sad enemy to study and accomplishments! 'Young girls,' he says, 'do too much now-a-days—they are expected to be proficients in every thing; and for all that, I don't find that they make better wives and mistresses of families than they did fifty years ago, when a woman was thought to be well brought up who could read her Bible and make a pudding.'

Mr. Russell and Mr. Huntley instantly stood up in defence of female cultivation. Mrs. Greenway listened to them with perfect complacence, and then replied,

"Oh, I agree with you entirely. I am quite of my husband's opinion—certain things are done in the world, and certain things *must* be done in the world, or else people are singular. It won't do to say every boy need not learn Latin.—Every boy must, because every boy does, and it is the same with girls and their drawing and music. Nothing but poor Eliza's health should have made us give up her drawing, in spite of what Lady Worral has always said about our throwing away so much money on our girls' education. It was but the other day she attacked Mr. Greenway and me about it. 'Fiddle-sticks'-ends' said she; 'what have *schoolmasters'* daughters, who have no pupils to teach,—what have *schoolmasters'* daughters, I say, to do with learning the harp and piano?' Ha, ha, ha! There's Mrs. Field, again, of Field House; she's one of the anti-educationists, but for a different reason. It is not waste of money *she* regrets, you know, but waste of time. 'I'd have all music-books, drawing-books, and story books burned in one great heap,' says she, 'and even then, girls would have temptations enough to neglect their religious and moral duties.' Dear me! people have such odd ideas and so different, havn't they? There's Phoebe Holland—*she*'s not over saving of money or time either, and I've heard her say 'La! what do accomplishments signify? pretty women are sure to be admired.'

Mr. Russell and Mrs. Greenway took leave together; and as soon as they had quitted the garden, Rosina began to lament that "poor dear Mrs. Greenway should be so utterly at a loss for an original idea."

"Nay, she is as original and much more honest than many," said Huntley as he drew on his gloves. "If every

one were to *own* how many of their clever speeches were borrowed from others and how many they had already made use of in different companies, our estimate of their originality would wofully decline. There are as many that live on other people's wit as on other people's fortunes. I have even heard a bon-mot unblushingly produced by a thief in the presence of the manufacturer. This good lady gives us references and authorities—it would be well if a few authoress I wot of would do the same."

CHAPTER XXVI.

DISSATISFACTION.

“Abused mortals! did you know
 Where joy, heart’s-ease, and comforts grow,
 You’d scorn proud towers,
 And seek them in these bowers,
 Where winds sometimes perhaps our woods may shake,
 But blustering care can never tempest make,
 Nor murmurs e’er come nigh us,
 Save of fountains that glide by us.”

THESE old lines of Sir Henry Wotton did Huntley repeat to himself one afternoon as he sauntered towards the seat near the church-yard, and he had soon an opportunity of quoting them to Mr. Russell, who was occupying the aforesaid bench, taking what Huntley surmised to be a siesta. On hearing footsteps, however, he opened his eyes, not at all with the bewildered, dazzled look of a man who has been caught napping, and a little book fell from his knee which he picked up and put in his pocket.

“You seem, like myself, to be enjoying the *dolce far niente*,” said Huntley, sitting down beside him on the bench; and then, without more preface he began to repeat the old song of Sir Henry Wotton’s, as if it had just come into his head. Mr. Russell did not know the lines, and asked whose they were, after which a little disquisition ensued on the character of the poet and the merits of his biographer. As Mr. Russell had never seen Isaac Walton’s memoir, the subject soon fell to the ground; and Huntley, feeling unusually at a

loss for small talk, inquired what book had engaged the vicar before he had disturbed him.

"Don't let me think I interrupt you," said he—"Go on reading by all means; read to me, if you will, for I am just in the humour."

"To fall asleep?"

"Why, that depends upon circumstances. If, indeed, the sermon should be uncommonly dull,—(for I take it for granted you have brought out nothing more enlivening than Sherlock or Tillotson,—")

"You mistake—it is Sherlock's and Tillotson's text-book."

"The Bible?" said Huntley, slightly curling his lip. "Well,—and that is better than a sermon book, any day; full of pathos and poetry. The only pity is, that we are made to read it before our tastes are formed, which impairs our relish for it as we grow older."

"The beauty of its imagery may, by that means, lose the force of novelty," said Mr. Russell, "but when you consider how necessary it is that our minds should be imbued, from the very first, with sacred truths which in after life we may want opportunity or inclination to acquire in an equal degree, you will agree with me that this greatly counterbalances the advantage of reading the Bible for the first time at a later period of life. Indeed, so much are we the creatures of habit, that religious tastes, if not formed in childhood, seldom attain their full growth."

"Perhaps that is the reason why I am not so serious as some people," observed Huntley carelessly, "for my mother, who is one of your very good people, was prevented by ill health, from educating me during my childhood, and I was brought up in a house where devotion was by no means *a la mode*. Yet I appreciate and cherish it in a way of my own, too. On a sunset evening or a starry night, in the depths of a forest or on the shores of the sea,

'Un non so che di flebile e soave'

has made me confess the nothingness of man and the grandeur of his Maker."

"That may be poetical, but is it religious?"

"Your interrogative is a polite way of hinting that it is not," said Huntley, laughing. "I have not forgotten that I am sitting next to an Artium Magister. Surely you are

liberal enough to grant that the Almighty may best be worshipped through his works?"

"Through his works—I believe I understand you. No, I am not so liberal, as you term it. That is good, but there is something better. He may best be worshipped by obedience to his laws. I maintain that no poetical feeling, can compensate for the absence of self-subjection."

"You maintain!" repeated Huntley, rather sarcastically, as if imagining a reproof to be implied.

"Nay, here is my authority," said Mr. Russell, looking down on his Bible.

"Oh, spare me chapter and verse. The obedience you talk of is impossible,—because—"

"Why?"

"Nay, you shall not provoke me to argue predestination and free-will with you.—You are armed at all points. But entire obedience is impossible; first, because there are a thousand different opinions on the meaning of the laws themselves, and secondly, because there is a warring spirit within us, which leads us to disobey them."

"All the divine precepts are contained in a very small portion of the little volume which I grasp in my hand: the laws of our country, Mr. Huntley, fill some hundreds of volumes, and employ some thousands of brains in comprehending them. Yet are good citizens nowhere found?—and does the warring spirit of hunger which makes a man steal a leg of mutton excuse him in the eyes of his countrymen? What becomes of your argument?"

It was impossible to chain Huntley down to any thing like a serious discussion. The easy brilliant way in which he handled amusing trifles made many give him credit for depth of mind; but as soon as any thing unconnected with pleasure or interest required serious thought, he flew off from the point.

Taking the Bible from Mr. Russell and turning over its leaves, something caught his eye which he read with great interest; and while the vicar was expecting some specious difficulty to be started, "What poem, ancient or modern, can surpass the book of Ruth?" exclaimed he. "I am glad the idea struck me of illustrating it! How exquisite is the feminine devotedness of this speech!—'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.' Exquisite Ruth!—If my Ruth, now,

would say as much to me!—I have a great mind, Russell," said he, laughing, "to make you my confidant."

"Stop!" cried Mr. Russell with a sudden emphasis which made Huntley start, "I wish for no confidence. My suspicions are my own; they may be founded or unfounded; but you must act for yourself."

"Certainly I had no idea of offending you by the offer of my confidence," said Huntley, looking surprised and hurt.

"You have *not* offended me; but confidence implies certain duties on the part of the confidant, which I am not altogether inclined to fulfil."

"What duties?"

"Secrecy,—sympathy,—assistance."

"Assistance I do not want," said Huntley proudly; "secrecy is not altogether indispensable, nor very hard to maintain if it were; and sympathy, Mr. Russell, though our acquaintance cannot boast very ancient date, I own I did not expect you to refuse. Well—I am sorry for this; it seemed to me that we understood each other. What am I to think, then? That we are rivals?"

Mr. Russel was silent.

"Enemies, perhaps?"

"No, Huntley, far, far from it. I have derived much more pleasure from your society than mine could possibly bestow in return. Why should we say any more on the subject? Let us each be satisfied to pursue our own paths, and continue to enjoy friendly companionship, without bestowing or seeking confidences which might probably lead to disapprobation and disappointment."

"As you will," said Huntley, looking proudly resigned; and, after a short pause, "Six o'clock!" exclaimed he as the church clock struck, "I must not loiter here any longer. Mrs. Wellford made me promise to drink tea with her. A pleasant evening to you." And humming an opera song, he walked down the hill.

Mr. Russell remained on the seat under the lime tree, watching the young painter till he vaulted over a stile and disappeared behind a hedge. Then he gave a deep sigh. "How many attaching qualities does that young man possess!" said he mentally; "and yet how little steadiness and religious principle form the basis of his character! He is governed solely by feeling, and as long as that is good, so long and no longer his virtue exists. And shall such a character rule the destiny of Hannah? Will she, temperate and right-judging

as she is, be dazzled by the shining qualities of one with principles so tottering? Or rather, *can* Huntley fail of success with any woman capable of feeling the omnipotence of genius? And *I* never foresaw the danger! And *I* might have prevented it!"

With a second sigh, deeper and more impatient than the first, Mr. Russell started up and returned to the vicarage.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BACHELOR'S REVERIES.

"HAVE you been sketching, this afternoon?" inquired Rosina of Huntley, as he joined them at the tea table.

"No," said he with a smile, "I have been better employed."

"Indeed! how so?"

"What do you think of my sitting under an old tree, reading the Bible with Mr. Russell?"

"Are you in earnest?"

"Quite so, I assure you. Now do not laugh at me!"

"Laugh!" repeated Hannah with unusual energy.

"No, I need fear no ridicule here, I am well assured; though among certain town acquaintance, I should have not escaped so easily."

"What a cowardly weapon satire is!" exclaimed Hannah.

"Yes: the old laws of chivalry forbade a warrior to strike at the arms or legs of his opponent: it would be as well if there was some moral rule answering to this in the code of the satirist, permitting him to lash crimes and follies unspuriously, but forcing him to respect what is good and useful."

Hannah looked pleased, and this short dialogue did more for Huntley than many of his most brilliant flashes of wit. From this time, Mr. Russell often met the lovers, as they must now be called, strolling through the pleasant lanes and meadows of Summerfield; and the smiling happiness of Hannah's downcast look, made his heart ache more than the triumphant glance of Huntley's black eyes. These were now the only occasions on which they met; for Mr. Russell was no longer a frequent visitor at the White Cottage; and it was remarked that he seemed grave and unhappy. Mrs. Welford mar-

velled what had estranged him from her family; and Rosina, now left pretty much to herself, became rather impatient at the absence of the only person who had lately seemed to think her worth particular attention. If, however, Mr. Russell vexed the mother and daughter by his unsociability, he punished himself much more. Attached to intelligent female society, and disposed to look to women for sympathy and amusement, yet unblessed by the companionship of wife, mother, or sister, it was in vain that this obstinate man sought for counterbalancing interest and employment among his books. If a clever remark occurred to him, he had no one who could benefit by it, and admire his ingenuity at the same time; nay, the pen often fell from his hand while his wandering thoughts pursued a channel as ill-adapted as could well be imagined, to edify the parishioners for whom he was inditing a sermon. Molly White remarked that "master had never been so hard to please, or she might say, so impossible to please at all; for if she sent up his veal cutlet ever so nice, he did not say it was well dressed, nor even seem to relish it." One day, after reading a passage of Hartley six times without understanding it, he threw the book aside and sallied forth with the air of a man who had formed a courageous resolution, muttering to himself, "I am weak as well as wrong in remaining passive; both duty and inclination call on me to speak." Acting on this conviction, Mr. Russell walked down the lane till he came within sight of Mrs. Wellford's gate, when his ardour began to cool, and he asked himself, "What are the motives at this moment influencing me? Am I not practising self-deception, and choosing to believe that I am undertaking a necessary duty, when in fact my interference is owing to jealousy and selfishness?" Alas! Mr. Russell could not answer the question to his mind; and seeing no inviting faces at the windows, he passed the gate with a sigh, and pursued the windings of the lane. On reaching the foot of the chalk hills, his bitter meditations on the past and the future were given up for thoughts of the present, when he saw Hannah and Huntley coming down a steep and narrow path; he standing a little below her, and holding her hand to enable her to make use of the precarious footing with safety, while she, with cheeks glowing with timidity, health, and exercise, was smiling assent to something he was saying. Before them in chase of a little dog, ran Rosina, fearless of danger, her straw bonnet blown back, and her brown ringlets scattered over her face and throat.

"What a coward you are, Hannah!" exclaimed she, looking back and laughing; and at the same moment, her foot slipped on the wet chalk, and Mr. Russell was just in time to save her from a sprained ankle. "Thank you," said she, recovering herself with celerity. "It was lucky for me, Mr. Russell, that you were at hand! Come here, Dash! Do look at my little dog—this is a new acquisition of mine; Phœbe Holland gave him to me. Did you ever see such a curly little thing in your life? I love him beyond any thing, but he has a terrible trick of running away."

"He won't do that I dare say, Rosina, when he knows you as well as I do," said Mr. Russell, trying to smile, as they were joined by Hannah and Huntley.

"Thank you for the compliment, Mr. Russell, I don't recollect your ever paying me so fine a one before; but you really cannot think what a troublesome little animal this is. Now I will just give you a specimen of the way in which he has worried me already. On Monday,—no, on Tuesday,—we took him out with us, and he ran away from us just by Mrs. Stokes's cottage. Well, all Mr. Huntley's whistling would not bring him back, and I was determined not to lose him. I ran after him, all across Mr. Holland's fields, till he actually took refuge in the stable! The very same afternoon, we were out again, and all at once Mr. Huntley missed him without our having any idea where he could be. I had not the smallest notion which way to turn, so Mr. Huntley proposed that he should go one way and I the other, which we accordingly did; and after half an hour's useless hunting, tired enough I was when I reached the place we had settled on for a rendezvous! Mr. Huntley had been much farther than I had, but he had got back soonest, and was resting himself quite exhausted on the seat where Hannah had been waiting for us; and all this was for nothing, for where do you think Dash was, after all?—Safe at home in the parlour! and I can't think who had shut him up, for mamma was at Mrs. Greenway's and Betty declared nobody had been in the house since we had left it. And yet Mr. Huntley is as fond of this tiresome little pet as I am, and will not come out without him on any account."

Rosina's stories of her dog lasted till they reached a small cottage, where Mr. Russell wished his companions good morning. "How excessively grave and austere Mr. Russell has become, lately!" exclaimed Rosina as soon as he had en-

tered the cottage; "he quite puts one in mind of melancholy Jaques! I cannot think what is the matter with him."

"Nor I," said Huntley. "My opinion of him has changed. I still believe him sensible and well-principled, but I no longer think him good-humoured."

Hannah gently defended Mr. Russell from the charge of ill-humour. Something vexatious might have happened, she pleaded, to cloud his spirits, but she had had opportunities for many years, of judging of his temper, which had always stood the test. It was hard to accuse him of ill-humour because he could not appear to relish pleasantries which perhaps he might feel to be ill-timed.

Lady Worrall called in the course of the afternoon. After inquiring whether Matthew and "her boy," as she always called Harry, had lately been heard of, she put poor Hannah to the blush, by saying in a significant manner, "Well, Hannah, when is it to be?"

And when Hannah, in a voice that seemed to dread an answer, faltered, "What does your ladyship mean?" she replied with a noisy laugh, "Why, your wedding to be sure? Every body says it is a settled thing."

"Rosina's colour mounted for her sister, and Hannah looked to her mother for assistance.

"Every body seems much better informed on the subject than we are," said Mrs. Wellford calmly, "but pray who does 'every body' in the present case happen to be?"

"Oh, I can give you my authorities! Mrs. Good, and Mrs. Greenway."

"And will your ladyship be kind enough to tell us what day they have fixed on for Hannah's wedding?"

"That's the very question Mrs. Good asked me this morning."

"Oh! then it appears that 'every body' does not *say* it is a settled thing, but wishes to know when it it *will* be a settled thing! You need not make yourself uneasy, Hannah. Perhaps, when Harry comes from school, we may hear as ingenuous reports set afloat concerning him and Fanny Good."

Lady Worrall laughed, and asked them to drink tea with her. Mrs. Wellford accepted the invitation, and her ladyship terminated the visit, saying she should expect to see Mr. Huntley with them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PURSE NETTING.

MR. RUSSELL and the Goods helped to form the usual c at Lady Worrall's. The shortening evenings now pre those who were not fond of cards from having recourse ramble in the park ; and as soon as the whist tabl opened, Mr. Russell asked Huntley if he played chess.

" Yes," said he, " Miss Wellford has just asked n same question, and I have challenged her to a game."

" It seems then," said Mr. Russell to Rosina with of resignation, " that you and I must be contented to l only idle ones of the party."

" I am not going to be idle, I assure you," replied she I have brought my netting.

" Have you ? Then I am reduced to seek for entertain in the Morning Post. Perhaps *you* would like to ' who's in, who's out; who loses and who wins.' " drawing one of the candles nearer to him, Mr. Russel out occasional articles of miscellaneous intelligence wh thought likely to amuse Rosina, till an epistle signed cus caught his attention, and left his companion re to her own resources for entertainment. At length, Mr sell laid down the paper, and gave rather a deep sigh.

" That is a pretty purse you are making, Rosina," s quickly, as she looked up from her netting, " do you m for me ? "

" No, indeed I do not ! It is bespoken and promised dy."

" For some more favoured swain than myself, I sup rejoined he, in a tone so different from gaiety that I raised her eyes in surprise. He was looking at the players, but as there was nothing extraordinary in thi gravity which overspread his countenance was unaccou

" Don't be uneasy," said Rosina, laughing, " the pu for mamma, and if you are really in want of one, the which I net shall be for you."

" Thank you, thank you," said he, moving his chair no longer to face Huntley, and stooping to examine Ro netting with an air of interest ; " but surely, this mixt colours will be too gay for one of my years and profes

" What will you have, then ? Blue, the colour of ho

"I pray thee, gentle lady, mock me not. What can a forlorn fellow like myself have to do with hope?"

"Well then, green or yellow?"

"No, no, that would remind me of the melancholy which devoured Viola's poor sister. Besides, those colours stand for jealousy, do they not? I would not wear the symbols of so odious a passion."

"Perhaps black would suit you?"

"Nay, I have enough of black already; I need not put my purse into mourning."

"Violet, then?"

"Violet,—yes, I like that colour, I am fond of violets; yet violet colour is mourning, too, you know in France,—court mourning. What think you of brown?"

"Oh, dismal to a degree!"

"To a degree! That is quite a young lady's expression.—Well cannot we find any colour to please both of us? What say you to crimson?"

"Yes, crimson will look very well."

"Then crimson let it be, since I see you are resolved on making me very gay."

"I wish I could," said Rosina with a smile.

"Hey?—what do you mean?"

"Oh!—nothing," replied she, pursuing her work.

"Fie, Rosina, I am sure you are too sensible to talk at random."

"Indeed, Mr. Russell, I meant nothing very deep. I said I wished I could make you gay, because I am fond of gaiety myself and like other people to be gay, and you have seemed rather the reverse lately—that is all, I assure you."

"Have you observed it?" said he in a lower voice. "It is true enough, but I did not suppose any one had noticed it—you are very quick-sighted." And with a sigh, Mr. Russell had again recourse to the *Morning Post*. "Ha!" exclaimed he, "my cousin Frank has returned from Switzerland! An idle young acquaintance has applied to him for bail. I suppose I shall hear from him soon."

"Has Frank returned?" said Huntley, looking up from the chess-board. "I shall have some curiosity to see his port-folio. He sketches beautifully, though he leaves his drawings unfinished. Perhaps I may run over to Switzerland next year myself, though Florence and Rome have more attractions for me.—Should *you* like to see Switzerland?" said he in a softer tone, to Hannah.

"Here's 'a medical gentleman near London *desirous* of receiving an insane inmate to be treated as one of the family,'" said Mr. Russell, "A curious taste, he must have, Rosina! 'Clotilda, queen of the Franks, a tragedy.'—It is a singular fact that women should have changed the religion of the greater part of Europe.—This Clotilda introduced Christianity into France; the sister of the emperor Henry the Second did the same for Hungary, the duchess of Poland for the Poles, and queen Olga for the Russians. You may be proud of the spiritual achievements of your sex.—Pray, have you heard from your friend Marianne Pennington lately?"

"About ten days ago—you know Lewis is gone to Germany?"

"Yes, he wrote me word of his intentions soon after he returned to Stoke Barton."

"Marianne's letter was little more than a lecture on what is just now her favourite pursuit,—natural history."

"Ah! she is a pupil of the doctor's. He must be very glad to have some one to sympathise with him in his darling study. Many a time have I seen him, on returning from a walk, unfold his handkerchief, and display a collection of beetles, caterpillars, mosses, stones, and hedge-plants, with something interesting to tell of each. What I particularly admire is the humanity with which he treats his live curiosities. But Rosina, allow me to hold that skein of silk for you. You are entangling it terribly."

This was unusual gallantry on the part of Mr. Russell, and Rosina found much subject for mirth in the awkward manner in which he performed his office. She mischievously attributed every knot to his faulty manner of holding the silk, which he maintained no one could do better; and the whist players looked round to see what occasioned so much laughter. Somehow Mr. Russell forgot his melancholy, and was remarkably lively and animated all the rest of the evening.

At eleven o'clock the vicar and the painter escorted Mrs. Wellford and her daughters through the Park; Mrs. Good followed, attached to her husband's arm by one hand, while the other held her dress cap, nicely pinned up in a handkerchief. Mr. Good was always rather sore on the point of Lady Worrall's no-supper system; and on entering his own house, he ordered up the tray, and helped himself to a biscuit and a glass of wine. While thus engaged, he summoned his wife's attention to the following warning.

"My dear, you must take care you do not catch the influenza that is going about."

"Influenza, Mr. Good?" repeated she. "I did not know there was one in Summerfield. Why did not you mention it before?"

"I did not think, my dear, it would spread in the degree it is doing."

"I am extremely sorry to hear such a disorder is prevailing! Why did you not set Lady Worrall on her guard?"

"I consider her ladyship rather too old to stand a chance of being attacked."

"I hope the children will not catch it. Do you think I had better keep them in the house?"

"No—I should rather trust to their youth—when their turn comes, neither you nor I shall be able to prevent it."

"Really you alarm me. Who has it?"

"I think Hannah Wellford is sickening, to a certainty."

"Dear, I am very sorry for it! What symptoms did you perceive?"

"Certain symptoms about the eyes. There was Mr. Huntley, too—"

"Indeed?—I hope we have not caught it, my dear."

"I hope not. It is sometimes very violent in its attacks, though some persons take it very quietly, and I think Hannah Wellford will very likely be among the number. I don't believe in its ever proving fatal, myself; though much has been written to prove the contrary. That nice young man,—what was his name?—who was staying at the vicarage?"

"Lewis Pennington?"

"Aye, the same—*He* carried the influenza away with him, it is my opinion; though nothing was more likely to cure him than change of—air."

"To be sure, I recollect now that he complained of feverishness and headache, the last time we saw him, at Mr. Holland's, and you know he was obliged to quit the party—Did that make you suspect he had the influenza?"

"Yes, Mrs. Good, it did. And now, here is Mr. Russell—"

"Upon my word, Sam, I do not know what to make of you—Mr. Russell was perfectly well this evening."

"My dear, don't interrupt me. What should you know of symptoms? I do not say he is positively attacked by the disease at this moment, but I think it is lurking about him. Did not you perceive a kind of languor, lassitude, dejection, and nervous twitching?"

"Why, now you mention it, I think I did."

"A kind of heaviness, as if from oppression somewhere about the chest,—a wandering of the eye—"

"Yes,—true."

"That was at the beginning of the evening. Afterwards, his spirits, without any apparent cause, became feverishly high, his cheek flushed, his eye brilliant—"

"Really, Sam, I wish I knew whether you are laughing at me or not?"

"Laughing, my dear! 'Tis no laughing matter to poor Mr. Russell, I assure you! He's a marked man."

"I wish, Mr. Good, you would tell me in earnest, what are the symptoms. Are they inflammatory?"

"I should rather say—amatory."

Here Mrs. Good fell into such a fit of laughing that her husband began to doubt whether she would ever recover. As soon, however, as she succeeded in regaining her composure, she said, "Do you actually mean to say that you think Mr. Russell is in love?"

"My dear, I cannot pretend to see farther into a mill-stone than any one else; but the *simple* state of affairs in the village at present, reminds me of Cruickshank's laughable illustration of the Golden Goose, where the man runs after the maid, the parson after the man, the clerk after the parson, and so on to the end of the chapter. It seems to me that Pennington is in love with Rosina, Rosina with Huntley, Huntley with Hannah, and Mr. Russell, with—which of the two sisters I am not quite sure."

"As if there could be a doubt!—That is, if he be in love at all, which, really, I can hardly imagine."

"And why not? He is still a young man."

"His habits seemed so fixed—And what hindered his stepping forward before, when he had the field to himself?"

"Ah, Fanny, that we must account for on the principle of opposition. That we may have, we won't have, and that we can't have, we will have. Till Huntley came, Mr. Russell thought he might have Hannah any day he chose to ask her, and so he never asked her till it was too late."

"I think he would not be too late now," cried Mrs. Good.

"I will lay you any wager—"

"My dear, I never lay wagers."

"Well!—we shall see."

"Yes," said Mr. Good, as he deliberately collected the fragments of the last biscuit; "time will show! We shall see;—we shall see!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

NEW LIGHTS.

WHATEVER doubt might be felt as to the nature of Mr. Russell's interest in Hannah Wellford, the depth of it admitted none. He was also very uneasy at having been the cause of Huntley's intimacy with the Wellford family, while so little was known of his character. Every one seemed to take him on trust; and Mr. Russell was almost provoked with Mrs. Wellford for relying with such easiness on his having been the introducer, as a gage for Huntley's honour. He had, indeed, early satisfied some compunctions visitings on this score by writing a letter of inquiry to his cousin Frank; but after vainly expecting an answer for several weeks, he learnt that Frank had set off some time before on a tour through Switzerland ere his letter could have reached him; and Huntley's increasing intimacy with the Wellfords, in the meanwhile, had rendered it more difficult and invidious to put them on their guard; while greater opportunities of judging of his habits and opinions, made the anxious vicar still more suspicious that much which was taken for granted, existed only on the surface. These were the doubts and difficulties which had lately withheld him from the White Cottage, where he had not quite temper enough to behold Huntley familiarly established.

On the morning after Lady Worrall's tea party, Mr. Russell was not a little pleased by the receipt of a thick packet from his cousin Frank. "All suspicions will at length be banished or confirmed," thought he, as he tore off the envelope. The young artist's letter was as follows:

"Greek-street, September 23d.

"DEAR RUSSELL,

"Only two days returned from a most enchanting three months' ramble which has enriched my port-folio with sketches innumerable, and my memory with subjects for many a dream

"On summer eve by haunted stream."

"Had you accompanied me, knapsack on shoulder, you

would certainly have laughed, when scenes more beautiful than my imagination had ever conceived, made me dance and almost shout with ecstasy ; and as I can't bear to be ridiculed when the fit is on me, it is lucky that you were not within sight and earshot. So here is a letter from you that has been lying on my writing table ever since June 12th ! With regard to this young Huntley you have written to me about, I suppose by this time you can say

“ He has come, he is gone ; we have met, —
And may meet, perhaps, never again ; ”

or at any rate you have had abundant time to make out his character for yourself, so that any attempt to delineate it now, will be useless. A fascinating young fellow he certainly is, as of course you have discovered ; and though rather lax in some of his notions, by no means so bad as to run away with any of the lambkins of your little flock—provided papa and mamma keep a prudent look-out. In short, the only——

“ September 28th.

“ I was interrupted here by a friend, who carried me off to see a capital Guido just imported. A thousand things have occupied me since, and among others, I have called on Mrs. Huntley. Perhaps you know Huntley has a mother and sister—the latter, a charming creature, fair, gentle, and elegant. From *them*, I learnt that Huntley is still at Summerfield ; and what keeps him so long in such an obscure place, they can only guess, as he never favours them with very communicative letters. Emmeline, however, (that is his sister,) suspects there is some attachment in the case ; as he has sent to her for music, Italian books, and I know not what besides, all evidently for *female* accommodation. She says she hopes it may be so, as she thinks Arthur would be a better and a happier man if he were united to a wife whom he thoroughly esteemed as well as loved. And as there thus appears some probability that he actually *does* meditate stealing one of your lambkins, I may as well tell you all I know of him from first to last, of which information you can then make what use seemeth good. To tell the truth, I began this sheet intending to dismiss the matter in a brace of sentences, and to devote the remaining space to a rapturous description of the Vaudois. But having broken the chain of my ideas, and beginning to

take some interest in the subject in hand, you shall have the whole story without further preamble.

" Huntley is by birth a gentleman: and his talents as you must have discovered, are of the first order. He unites industry to genius, and it is therefore probable that he will rise to considerable eminence in his profession. His father married a very beautiful and amiable young woman, whose rank in life was not equal to his own;—the daughter of some music-master or tutor, I believe,—I am not sure which. This *mésalliance* offended his family, who would never take the smallest notice of him, nor of his widow and children after his death. Will you believe it? Huntley is very sore on this point, and cannot forgive his mother for being, as he considers her, the cause of his being confined to a rank beneath that in which he is entitled to shine! Captain Huntley left his widow two or three hundred a year, on which she managed to live respectably in a cheap part of the country. Unluckily she had, previous to this time, and in the hope of conciliating her husband's relations, given up the charge of her son to an old aunt of Captain Huntley's, the only member of the family who had not utterly cast him off; and thus, the opportunity was lost of rivetting the boy's affections on his mother and attaching him to home. The old lady brought him up very injudiciously, spoilt him by indulgence, exerted no control over his temper, and taught him to hate and despise his mother's family. The worst of it was that being literally one of the children of this world, she endowed him with no religious principle. Luckily for Huntley, this old beldame died when he was about twelve years old; but she did all the harm she could by leaving what little property she had, to become his on attaining majority, while the interest meantime was to defray the expenses of his education and supply him with pocket money. Huntley was now sent to school for a few years, and his holydays instead of being spent at a luxurious home, were passed beneath the humble roof of his mother. His predilection for painting had early shewn itself, and as no one united the wish with the power to alter his determination in the choice of a profession, he became a pupil of one of our best artists. As he boarded with his teacher, Mrs. Huntley had little opportunity of watching the bent of his mind, or endeavouring to control it; but at the expiration of his studies, she quitted her Welsh cottage for the purpose of keeping house for him in town. It soon became evident how ill they would agree together. Mrs. Huntley blamed her son for the

expensive elegancies with which she found him surrounded, and which, though by no means out of the way to London eyes, were quite the reverse to one who had long been confined within a narrow income; but as Huntley had just attained possession of his legacy, he laughed at her remonstrances. Moreover, Mrs. Huntley, who may be rather overstrict in her religious notions, was shocked at the laxity of her son's principles and practice. Much reproof on her part and ridicule on his, was the consequence; and he sought refuge from her attempts at his conversion, in gayer society. So attractive are Huntley's manners that he was welcomed and sought out, not only by brother artists of similar tastes and habits, but by many men of superior rank, at whose convivial meetings he was a favoured guest. Thus courted and flattered, no wonder that he learnt to believe it was at home alone he was undervalued. Female smiles also had some influence over him; aristocratic beauty, if studio gossip speaks true, bewildered his heart as well as his eyes, and there is some story of a painter's beautiful daughter having died of disappointment, because the person to whom she was engaged,—changed his mind! As this has not come to my own knowledge, however, I pass it over. But certain it is, that to keep pace with his gay friends, Huntley plunged into every kind of dissipation, and that his affairs became much involved. His mother assisted him with her slender purse; but this generosity, though it touched him with momentary gratitude, could not enhance his relish for the atmosphere of home. He never could help feeling or fancying that there was a taint of vulgarity about his mother, and was repelled by what he termed inelegance and *gaucherie* in his sister, though the faults of both existed only in his fastidious imagination, and Miss Huntley, especially, is one of the most naturally graceful and elegant creatures that ever breathed. The moment the brush was laid down, he sought for stimulus abroad, among his friends, at the opera, or the theatre. Thus affairs went on till some misunderstanding more serious than usual, occasioned a total rupture between the mother and son, and it was mutually determined that they should part. Mrs. Huntley took a small house near Dulwich, and her son engaged lodgings in a fashionable street where he has remained ever since. A reconciliation was with infinite difficulty, patched up by Emmeline, but no ~~peace~~ between such opposite characters can be entire or lasting. Such is the history of my gay and gifted friend, who,

it seems, is making such havoc among you at Summerfield. Upon my honour, he must be deeply enamoured to have lowered his crest to a level with the best of your village maidens; he, who swooped at the highest game! If you had any sisters of your own, I should venture a word or two of caution; but as that is not the case, why should I puzzle or concern myself for some one who may after all only turn out to be a lady of the mist, a beauteous exhalation of a whimsical fancy? or why should I pursue the invidious task of ~~dwelling~~ on the errors of a young man in whose company I have passed many gay, if not many wise hours? I can't think what ails my spirits to-day. This villainous thick London air! who can breathe in it, after knowing what it is to respire a mountain breeze? Art seems stagnant—half the academicians are foraging for new subjects, in and out of the country, and the rest are dozing while the oil dries on their palettes. No parliament sitting for the good of the nation, nor beauties for the good of our purses—no new books, no new faces, no new conspiracies or murders. The newspaper-mongers must be living on the gain of a dead loss!—After all, Huntley has discovered a secret worth knowing to epicures of excitement; the best amusement in such times as these is falling in love! *Vive l'amour, le champagne, et la beauté!*

“Thy loving kinsman,

“FRANK RUSSELL.”

Mr. Russell's first thought on finishing this letter, was to shew it to Mrs. Wellford. He would then disencumber his conscience of a heavy weight; she would be the responsible agent; and if she chose to persist in encouraging Huntley as the suitor of her daughter, it would be with open eyes.

Accordingly, at about the time when he thought Mrs. Wellford most likely to be at leisure, he left his house; and close to the church-yard gate fell in with Hannah and Rosina. The unexpected sight of the person he was thinking of and the certainty that he should find Mrs. Wellford at home without chance of interruption, made him speak to the girls with a degree of hurry which much amused Rosina, who pondered for ten minutes on the cause of Mr. Russell's perturbation. On their return, she was surprised to see her mother with red eyes.

Mrs. Wellford had had a discussion and almost a dispute

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with Mr. Russell. On his proceeding, after certain circumlocutory prefaces, to tell her in plain English, that soon after his becoming acquainted with Mr. Huntley, he had written to his cousin Frank to inquire into the respectability of the young man, and that he had brought her the tardy reply in case she felt any curiosity as to its contents, Mrs. Wellford thanked him very heartily for the offer, adding something which she left unfinished as she hastily opened the proffered letter, about its becoming now important to learn as much of Mr. Huntley's habits and ~~connections~~ as possible. Mr. Russell watched her countenance, and saw it clouded very deeply as she read the second and third pages of Frank's foolscap sheet; and when she had finished it, she ~~laid~~ her head upon her hand, and the tears trickled through her fingers. But, wiping these hastily away, she took up the letter again, observing to Mr. Russell that she was vexing herself very foolishly, for that on consideration, the greater part of what Mr. Frank Russell had stated amounted to little. And then, going over it from the beginning, she made her own remarks as she went along; observing in the first place, that Mr. Huntley's education having been committed to a very injudicious preceptress was his misfortune rather than his fault, and that if, in after life, he had done as much as possible to rectify his youthful errors, it was as much as could be expected, and more than many young men would effect. Secondly, that his choice of a profession, which was so much less likely to attract ambition and vanity than the army or the law, and his industrious pursuit of it, spoke much in his favour. Thirdly, that the luxuries of which Mrs. Huntley complained, were such as, the writer acknowledged, were common to London eyes. Fourthly, that ill-judged attempts at conversion, and trite moralizing, were likely enough to disgust a young man with his home, which it should have been his mother's business to make pleasant to him. Fifthly, that it was probable that Mrs. and Miss Huntley's manners *were* vulgar, and their minds narrow and common-place, notwithstanding Mr. Frank Russell's opinion to the contrary. And sixthly—*now*, Mrs. Wellford owned, they were coming to the real difficulties of the case,—it was natural that a young man of genius just one and twenty, should be rather thoughtless in his use of a legacy. It appeared that his mother had paid his debts, which *could not* have been very great, since her own income was only two hundred pounds.

Mr. Russell corrected her—three hundred.

Well, three hundred. "Two or three hundred ~~year~~ year." However, Mr. Huntley's embarrassments must be inquired into, as well as this story of the painter's daughter, whenever he should propose for Hannah. As he had not yet done this, to the best of Mrs. Wellford's belief, as Hannah was not ~~a~~ girl to give away her affections unasked, any such inquiry at present would be rather premature, though she was much obliged to Mr. Russell for the interest he seemed to take in her daughter's welfare. As to the story of the painter's daughter, she owned she *should* like to have that cleared up at once, for the gratification of her own curiosity, and it would most likely turn out to be an error. Mr. Russell might take notice, his cousin did not vouch for it. Perhaps Mr. Russell would have the kindness to write once more to his cousin on the subject, and to ask him to sift it to the bottom, without leading him to infer that any one but himself was interested in the inquiry. Ten to one, it would prove an ill-natured story. It was not unlikely that Mr. Frank Russell saw far less into Mr. Huntley's real character than she did. Idle chit-chat in studios, auction-rooms, theatres, and dinner parties, just at the time when men were busy or seeking relief from business, could afford much less opportunity of judging of the mind and heart than the daily routine of quiet country life, where there was no excitement, no false glare, no temptation to be striving to appear more worldly than in reality.

Mr. Russell was quite taken by surprise by the flow of Mrs. Wellford's eloquence. He had had no idea of finding her heart so completely in Huntley's cause. That she should weigh every thing well before admitting its truth and importance was perfectly natural, but there was an accent of displeasure at his interference, a tone of coolness for which he had been wholly unprepared. That "thanking him for the interest he *seemed* to take in her daughter," cut him to the heart. Mr. Russell made use of the first opportunity of speaking which the lady allowed him, with more warmth than on any occasion recorded; he spoke of Hannah's simplicity, of Hannah's inexperience, of Hannah's happiness at stake, with so much energy as to dissolve Mrs. Wellford in tears. But she could not give up Huntley. No: she was so certain that he really was well principled, that his heart was good, that his heart was devoted to Hannah! Hannah, so good, so attractive, so charming! Hannah to lose her first, her

only lover,—one who *seemed* at least, to deserve her, through the misrepresentations of one who had written in idleness or in malice! Mrs. Wellford wondered to herself, with a little bitterness, how it was that Mr. Russell had kept this marvellous interest in Hannah's welfare so quietly asleep till Hannah had nearly reached the age of twenty-three!

In short, the interview was unsatisfactory. One would not, and one could not, be convinced; and yet, though Mrs. Wellford declared she laid not the smallest stress on Mr. Frank Russell's communications, they had had the effect of making her very unhappy; and she renewed her request that Mr. Russell would write again to his cousin. He promised that he would, and quitted the White Cottage more surprised and disappointed at Mrs. Wellford's conduct than, an hour before, he could have believed possible. "She is wilfully, childishly blind!" thought he, "blind to her daughter's best interests. And all for the sake of seeing a daughter married! The only thing mothers care for, from first to last!" If ever Mr. Russell was in an ill-humour, it was on this blessed day.

CHAPTER XXX.

CROSS PURPOSES.

Mrs. Wellford brooded over all that had passed, and alternately trembled for Hannah's happiness, found excuses for Huntley, and fretted at Mr. Russell's doubts and prophecies, till at length, an idea darted into her head, which atoned for all the vicar's *brusquerie*, accounted for his warmth, and elucidated much which had hitherto been mysterious. He must certainly be himself attached to Hannah; and downright jealousy had occasioned all this curious investigation of Huntley's early history. Though this by no means cleared Huntley of the errors laid to his charge, and left Mrs. Wellford as anxious and doubtful as ever, whether he were worthy of Hannah, she could not help feeling a glow of pride at the idea of her daughter's conquest of such a man as the vicar. In the afternoon, when Rosina observed "how very oddly Mr. Russell had behaved in the morning, and indeed, how strange

and unaccountable he had been for some time," Mrs. Wellford smiled with great significance, and remarked that his conduct really *was* unaccountable, unless he were in love. And on Rosina's exclaiming, "Surely, that would be too ridiculous!" her mother replied with the oracular observation that "Stranger things had happened." Rosina coloured, and kept her surprise to herself. Somehow it never occurred to her that Hannah could have two admirers.

Within a day or two, Mr. Russell happened to have business at Hexley, and on returning through the town, he saw the Miss Wellfords in the principal shop, parcel haberdasher's, parcel chemist's, parcel librarian's. He went in, and found Hannah buying gloves, and Huntley and Rosina amusing themselves with examining the contents of the bookshelves, which contained three sets of travels, and twenty novels. Huntley was diverting himself with culling the choice passages scored in pencil or with thumb-nails, by milliners' apprentices, and marked by such encomiums as "Excellent! —how affecting! —how true to nature," &c. Rosina was deep in one of the Scotch novels, which she declared she must take home "to amuse mamma;" and, to gratify her filial piety, Mr. Russell dropped two volumes into one pocket and a third into the other. Thus ballasted, he drew her arm within his, observing that it was now her duty to beguile the weariness of his journey homeward. Huatley told her that she had selected the least worthy of Sir Walter's works, but added that *his* worst was better than most men's best, and that for his own part, he loved even his faults. Mr. Russell observed that this was letting partiality have too much influence over judgment.

"And would you always have partiality kept within the bounds of judgment?"

"Yes, always. I would love what was good and blame what was bad in any book, any thing, or any person."

"Then, if the good preponderates over the bad in either the thing or the person, I think you are cruelly strict; because no one is perfect."

"But that is no reason why faults are not to be corrected."

"It is a reason why some faults should be tolerated. Give me a friend that would love me wholly, undividedly, faults and all."

"Such a person would not be a friend, because a real friend would tell you of your faults."

"A friendly eye would never see such faults."

"A flatterer's would not, though they were as high as huge Olympus, but as far as regards a plain-spoken, right-minded friend,—I think he would try to conceal them from other eyes, but endeavour to make them as clear as daylight to yourself."

"An office, Mr. Russell, which plenty of friends are always mighty willing to undertake,—friends, in whom it would sometimes be difficult to find any other mark of friendship. Oh! I hate, I abjure your 'friendly freedoms!' Depend upon it, they cause half the misunderstandings and coolnesses that arise among relations and neighbours. A man who reprimands another, stands for the moment on higher ground; he has the power of saying 'I am better than thou,' to some one who in every point but one, is very likely his superior. I have heard that it is, or was, the practice in the Lancasterian schools, when a little boy came up with his class without having performed his morning ablutions, to pick out a clean little girl who was instructed to approach the dirty little boy and give him a slap on the face. It always appeared to me a likely plan to make the clean little girl malicious and conceited."

Huntley had the laugh on his side; and the narrowness of the path obliging the walkers to separate into couples, he led the way with Hannah, remarking to her, *sotto voce*,

"Mr. Russell reminds me of Cornwall's reproof of Kent in King Lear—

"This is a man
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A surly roughness; and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he!
An' they will take it, so; if not,—he's plain."

But perhaps I am wrong in demanding undivided friendship from man; it is only woman who can love through clouds and sunshine, and see no imperfections in those to whom she is attached."

Mr. Russell was meanwhile observing to Rosina, "Would any one think, now, to hear Mr. Huntley claiming indiscriminate partiality, that he could ever laugh at a distant friend, or turn a relation into ridicule?"

"He certainly indulges in satire, sometimes," said Rosina. "Yes, we often find that those who most dislike pain, have least objection to inflict it on others."

Here Mr. Russell fell into a reverie; and as he walked very slowly, Rosina asked him if he were tired of carrying the books.

"Not in the least," replied he, rousing up, "I had entirely forgotten them. What is a weight in the pockets to a weight on the mind?—If the novel is no heavier to read than it is to carry, you may think yourself very well off."

"I hope you do not think me very foolish for liking novels."

"Foolish! I think a good novel is a very rational recreation. Oh, no, it is some time since I have thought you foolish."

"You own that you did, once, Mr. Russell?"

"Why, once,—I did, indeed, have some misgivings how you might turn out; but time has convinced me that a lady may be indulged in a little frivolity at sixteen, without being utterly hopeless at sixty. No, Rosina, no one could love and live with your mother and sister, and yet be foolish."

"I am glad to hear you say so; for sometimes, when I think how completely different I am from Hannah, I almost despair of being any thing better than a grown up child if I lived to the age of Methusaleh."

"And how often are you troubled with these serious reflections?"

"Oh, oftener than you would suppose. Mr. Good vexed me amazingly one day, when mamma had been telling him that *one* of her daughters had said so and so, by replying 'Oh, you need not tell me which of your daughters, no one could mistake a speech of Rosina's for Hannah's, or vice versa.' Now, as the remark in question was rather a flippant one, you cannot think how ashamed I felt! It was horrible to consider that no one ever gave me credit for speaking common sense! Ever since, I have been trying, at spare time, to construct my ideas and expressions as much on Hannah's model as possible."

"No, no, Rosina, that will never answer. As well might L'Allegro dress up in the cypress weeds of Il Penseroso. Do not spoil your originality by endeavouring to acquire what will only sit awkwardly on you, after all."

"You frighten me, Mr. Russell! Originality? Am I an original?"

"Indeed you are," replied he, laughing.

"Oh, now I see that you and Mr. Good are in a conspiracy against me. But seriously, how am I to set about improving, if I am not to copy Hannah?"

"A serious question demands a serious answer. It is my humble opinion that, without copying Hannah, you might adopt some of those means which have made her what she is. Read more, think more—I must not say consult the looking-glass rather less."

"You *may* say so," said Rosina, colouring, "because I really do desire to improve."

"And I really believe you!" replied Mr. Russell, with uncommon animation, "and have even confidence enough in your good sense to say, that there would be less danger in your looking-glass if it reflected a less pretty face. There is a speech now, which would turn many a young lady's brain! And yet I am hardy enough to make it to a little coquette."

"You do not think me a coquette, I hope."

"I used a diminutive—a *little* coquette; and the less, I must confess, the better."

Again Mr. Russell seemed oppressed, by the weight on his mind or in his pockets.

"Did your mother say any thing to you, Rosina," asked he abruptly, "about what passed between us yesterday?"

"Not a word! I was not aware she had even seen you!"

"Indeed!"

"Oh, now you remind me of it, I remember she did mention in a casual way, that you had called upon her. I thought something appeared to have made her low-spirited; but after her telling me that she was quite well, I did not think I had a right to make any further inquiry."

"True, very true. I rather repented, afterwards, that I had seen her. Low-spirited was she?"

"Oh, not enough so to make you uneasy. She was very cheerful in the afternoon."

"Cheerful!"

After a moment's silence, Mr. Russell repeated, "Yes I am sorry for what passed between us. It would have been better if I had not spoken at all on the subject, or else, if I had spoken to Hannah or to you—but there are times when strong feelings make us act unwisely."

"Dear," cried Rosina, heedlessly, "does strong feeling ever make *you* act unwisely?"

"Why not?" said Mr. Russell, stopping short, and colouring to his temples.

It instantly occurred to Rosina, that there could no longer be a question as to Mr. Russell's being in love. Not knowing what might come next, nor what might have been the nature

of his interview with her mother, she began to feel excessively uncomfortable, and to wish they could come up with Hannah and Huntley. All Mr. Russell's addresses, his attention to her at Lady Worrall's, her mother's red eyes, and significant hints, came to remembrance, and seemed to her, to have but one interpretation. Her mother had been proud of the compliment implied by Mr. Russell's proposals, and yet unwilling to sacrifice her to a man twice her age, and for whom she had no warmer sentiment than respect. It must be so, it could not be otherwise! Poor Rosina, flattered, yet woefully disconcerted, stole her hand from her companion's arm, and began to open her parasol; while he, little guessing what was passing in her thoughts, though not without his own embarrassments, said—

“ Does it really appear so very ridiculous to you that I should be susceptible of strong feeling?”

“ Ridiculous—dear me! no,—I did not know I had used such a word. By the by, where is Dash? He was in sight just now—I think he must have run into that turnip-field.”

“ Pray, Rosina, what is your real opinion of Mr. Huntley?”

“ In what respect?” said she, much surprised at the question. “ His genius, or his manners, or what?”

“ No, no—his temper for instance?”

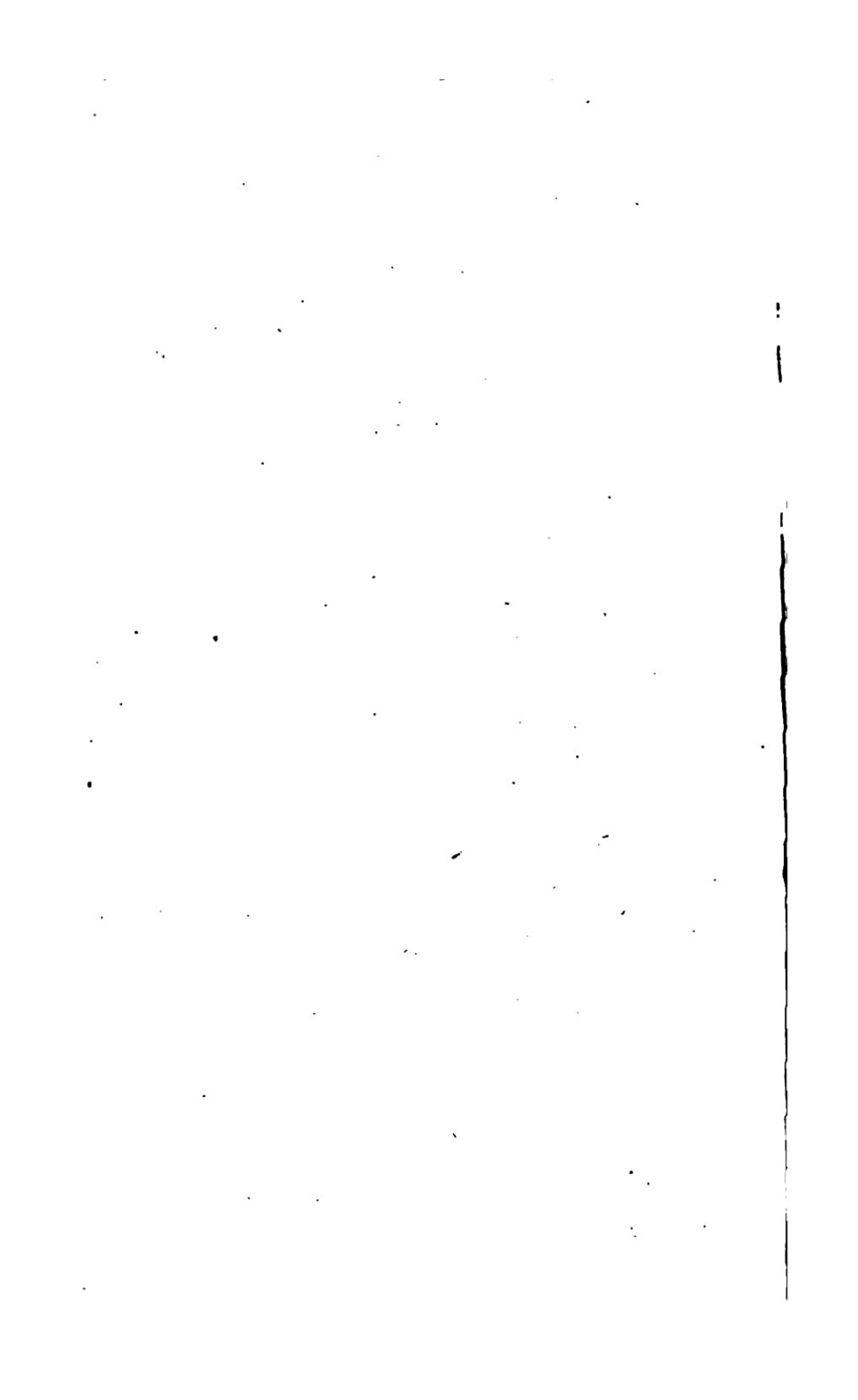
“ I have never seen it tried.”

“ That is likely enough—and even if you had, genius and manner, with ladies, cover a multitude of sins.”

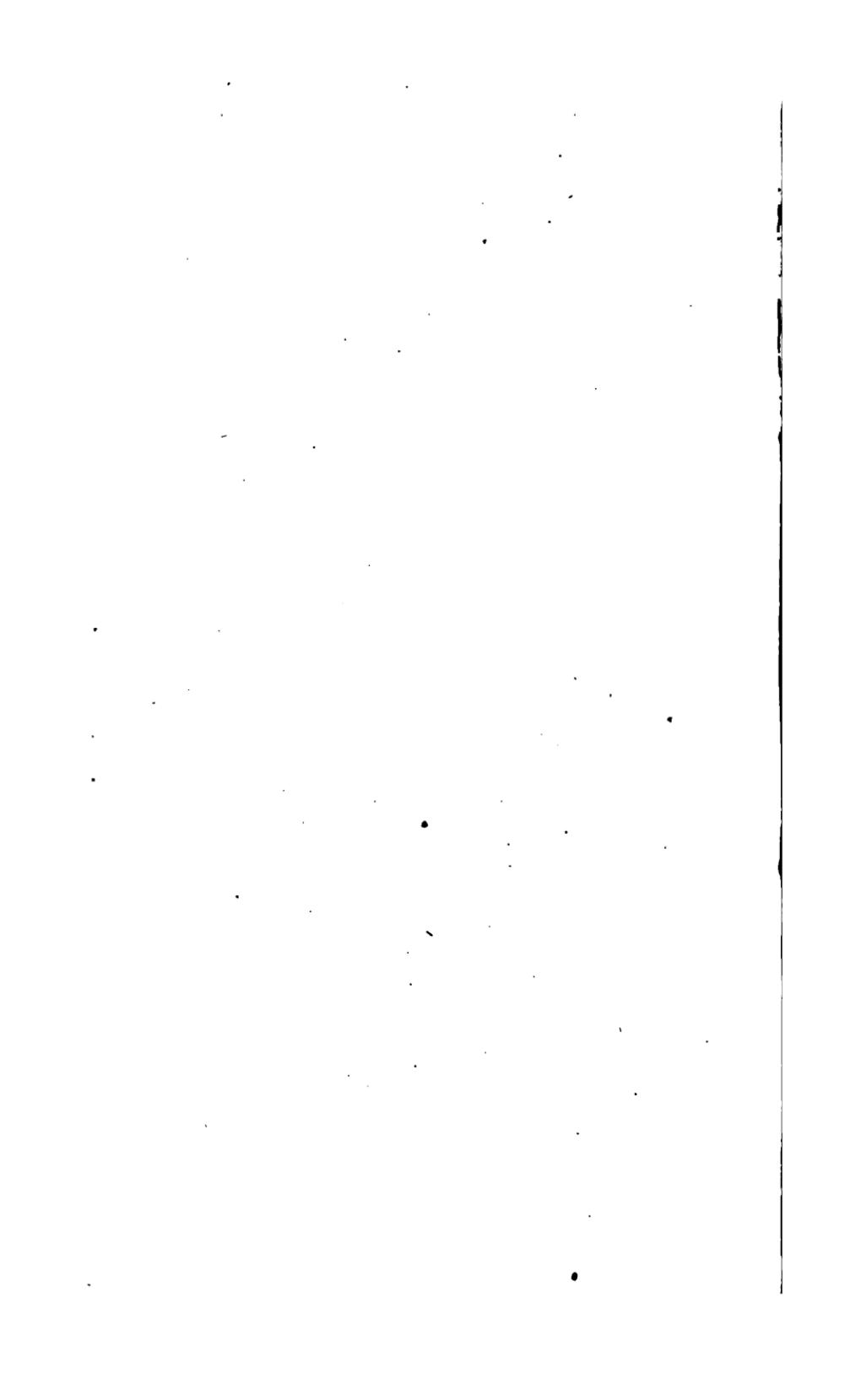
“ Of foibles, I allow, but surely not sins.”

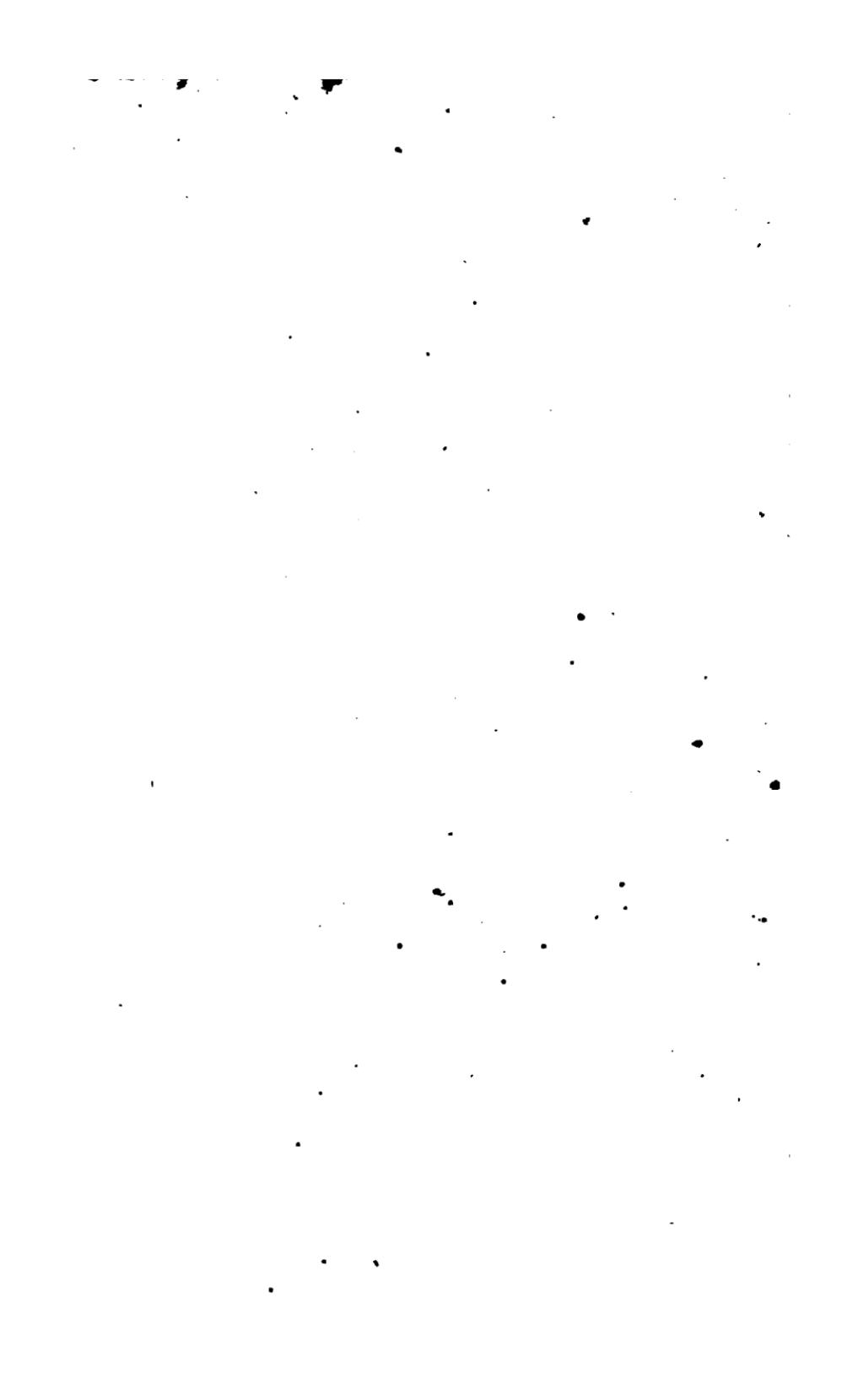
“ Perhaps,” said Mr. Russell, with a little asperity, “ there are few sins which we cannot soften into foibles.” And changing the subject with a gentler voice, he began to speak of—Swedish turnips!

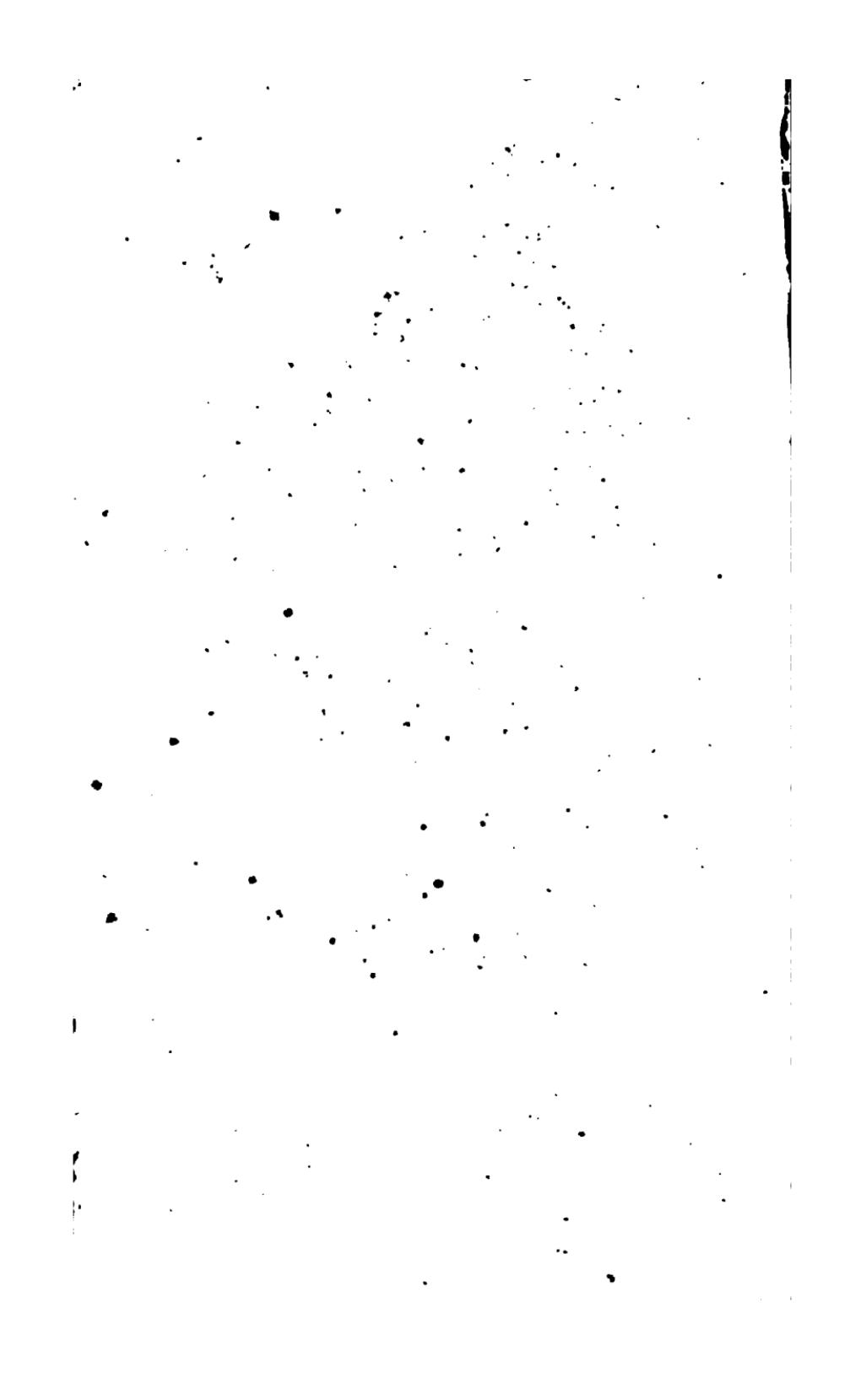
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